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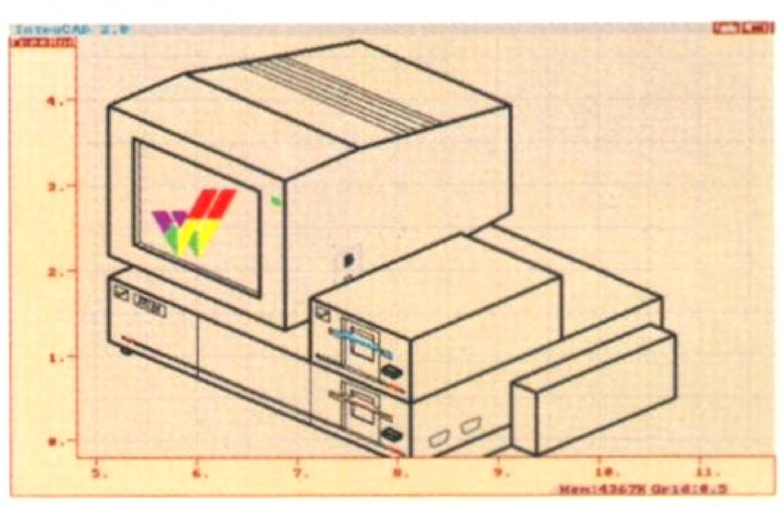
AMIGA FORMAT

ISSUE 38 ■ SEPTEMBER 1992 ■ £3.95

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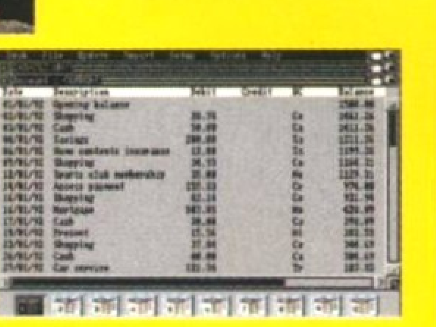
AMIGA FORMAT — Down at the Arcade

3D Construction Kit 2



Try your hand at creating 3D games in Domark's astonishing and fascinating demo

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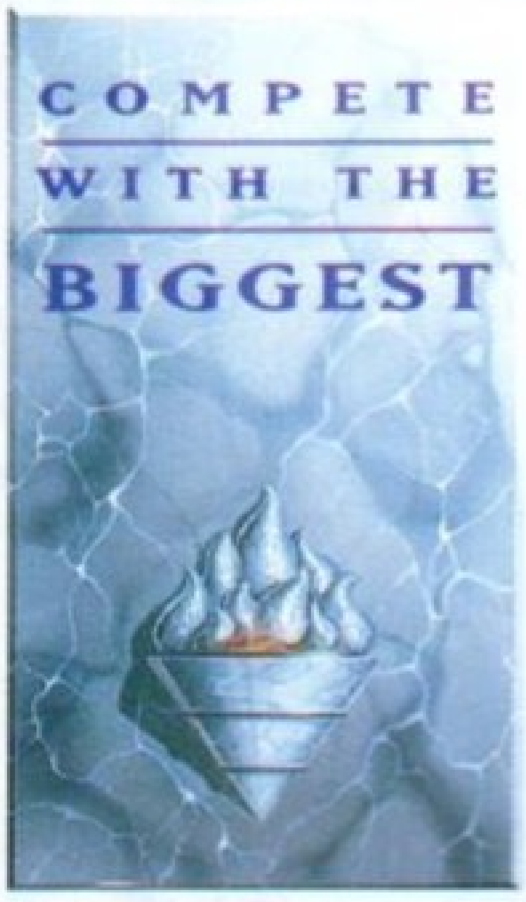
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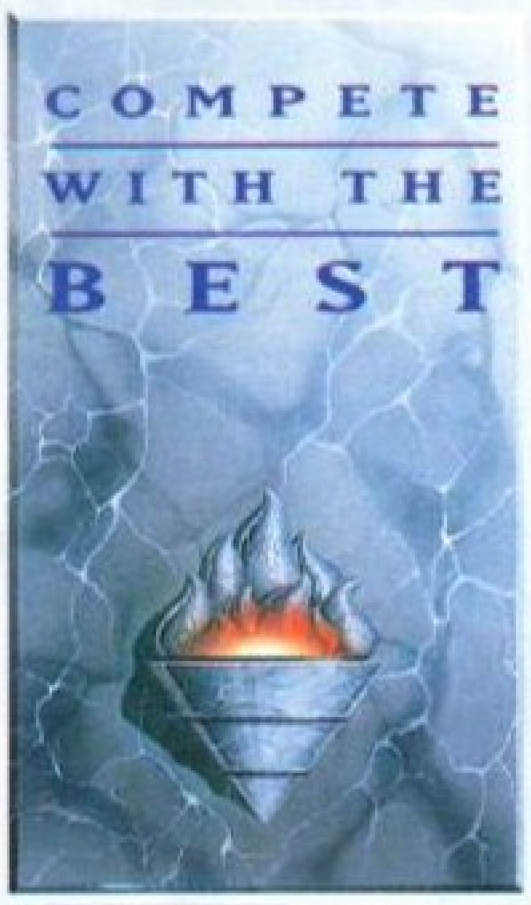
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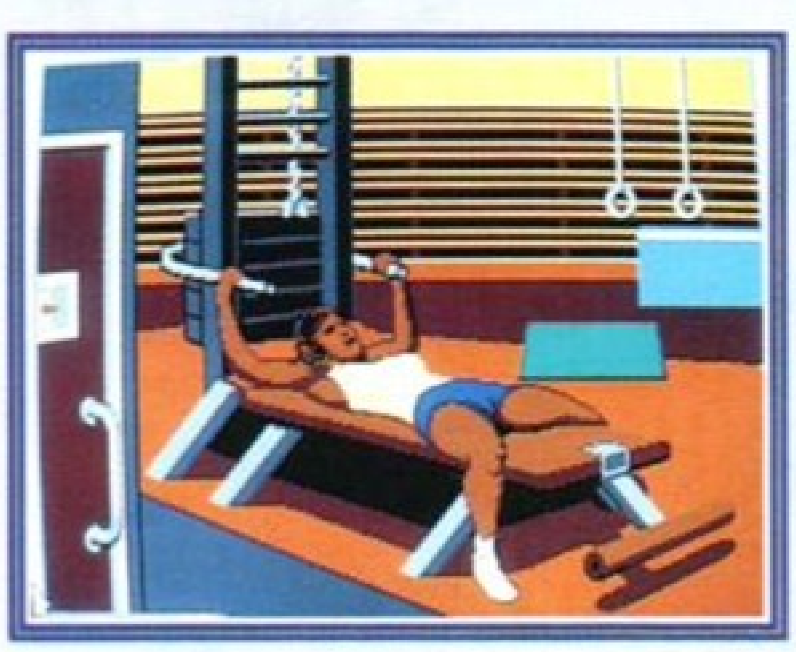
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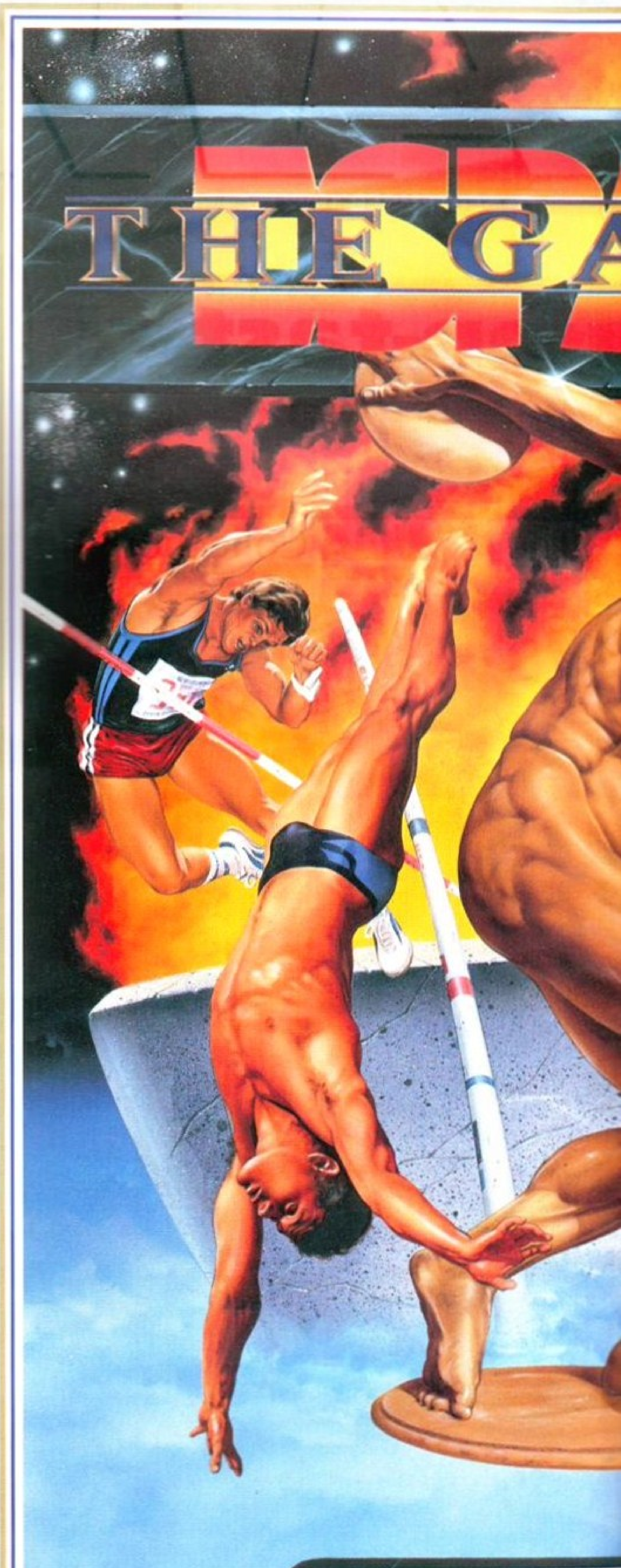


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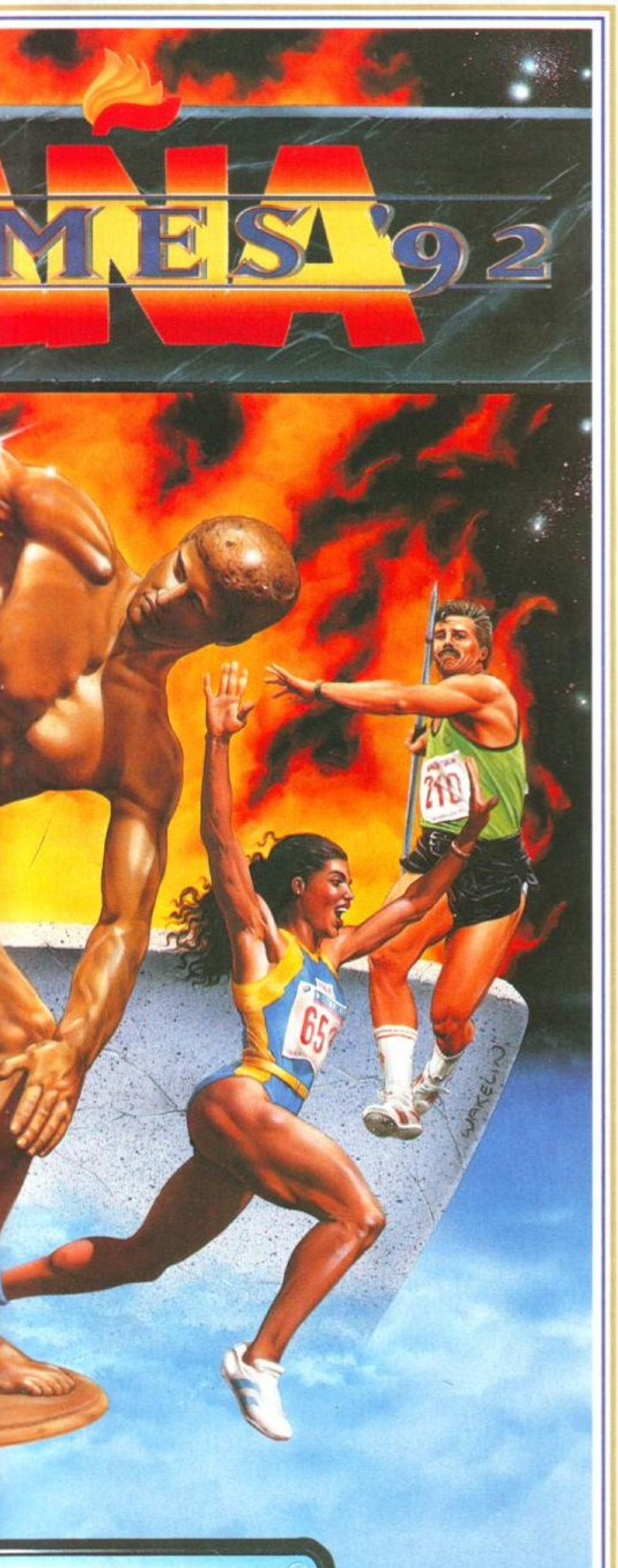


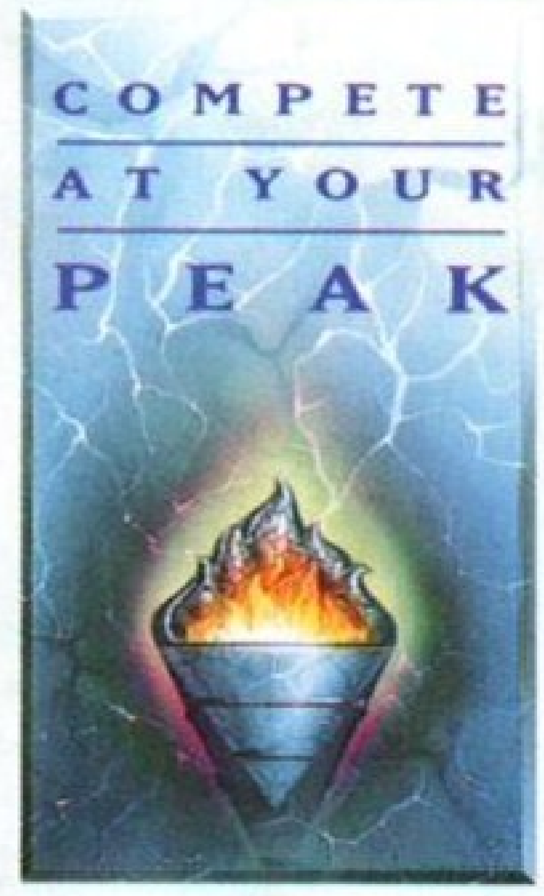




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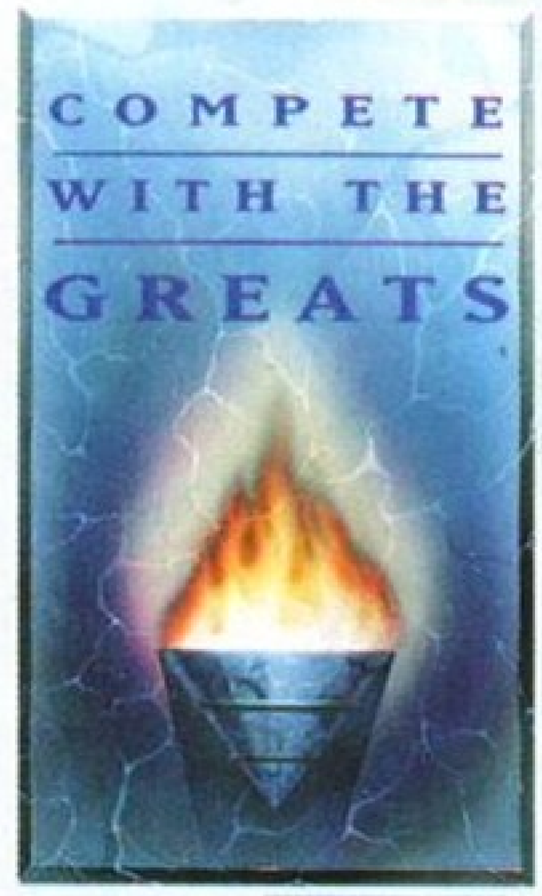
SPORTS SENSATION





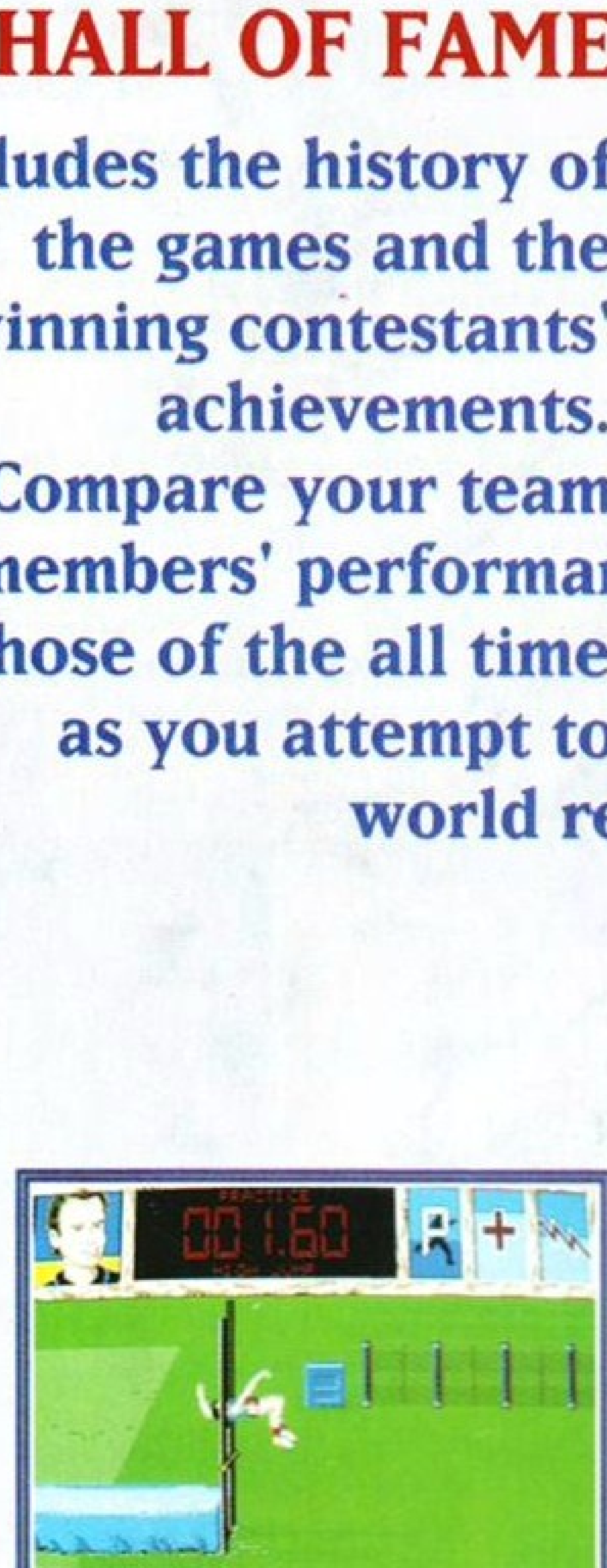
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PRINTED IN THE UK BY
Chase Web Ltd, St Ives PLC, Plymouth
NEWSTRADE DISTRIBUTION, UK
Future Publishing, 0225 442244
NEWSTRADE DISTRIBUTION, OVERSEAS
MMC Ltd 0483 211222

AMIGA FORMAT

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Out-of-date joke of the month:

What's the unluckiest animal in the world?

The hedgehog that crossed six lanes of the M1 then got hit by an aeroplane...

Member of the Audit Bureau of Circulations

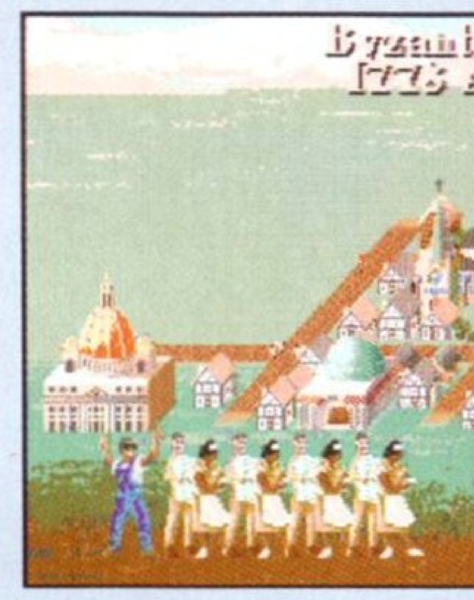
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News

The Future Entertainment Show
Earls Court 1 & 2
November 5 - 8 1992

IN NEWS
Exciting new developments for the CDTV as a new pack is released that includes mouse, keyboard and disk drive to match...

Screenplay

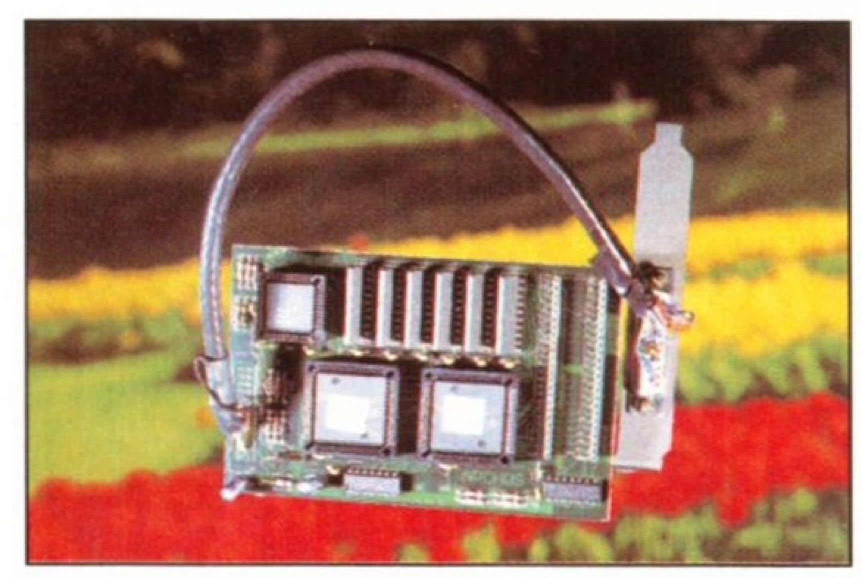


CIVILIZATION
The latest in a long line of god games. But does it match up to the rest?



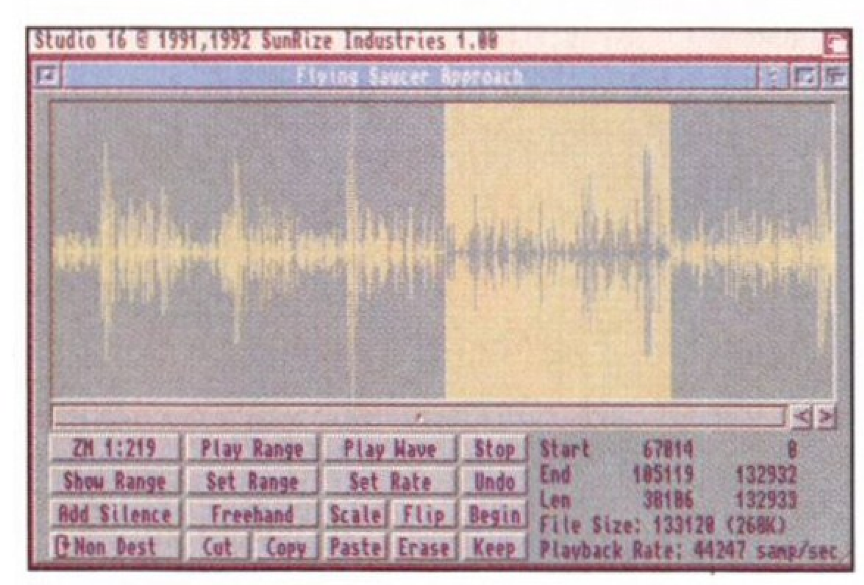
HOOK
Can Ocean's big licence rival US Gold's *Monkey Island 2*?

Reviews



REVIEWED
AVideo 24

For the first time, there's a 24-bit card that you can afford – so is this to be the route to 16 million colours for you?



REVIEWED
AD1012/*Studio 16*

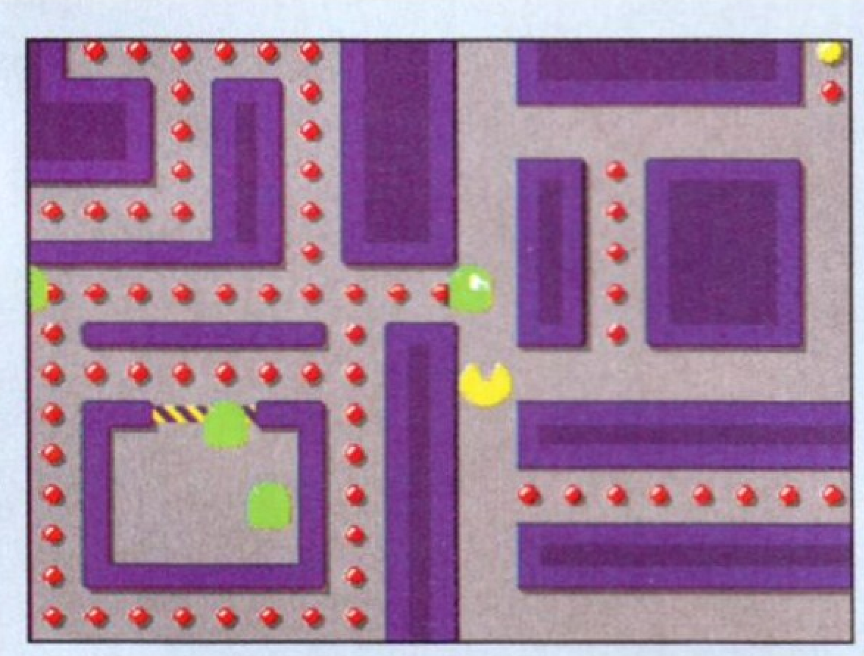
OK, it looks dull: but this amazing hardware and software combo gives you 16-bit sampling and direct-to-hard-disk music recording...



REVIEWED
Texture Disks

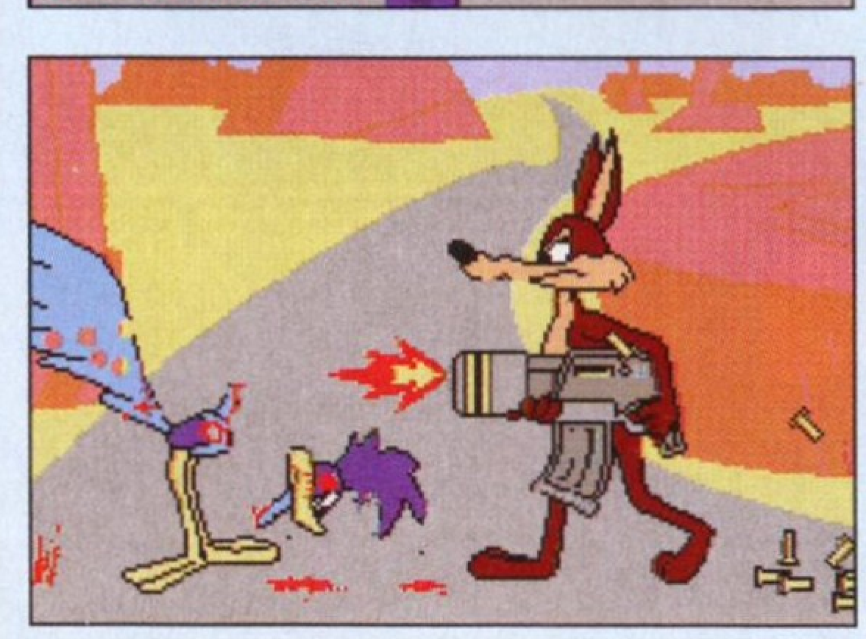
If you want to make your video images more real, these two sets of ready-made textures could be the answer you require.

Regulars



IN PUBLIC DOMAIN

Tim Howell explores the world of free games and utilities software, and makes a few recommendations.



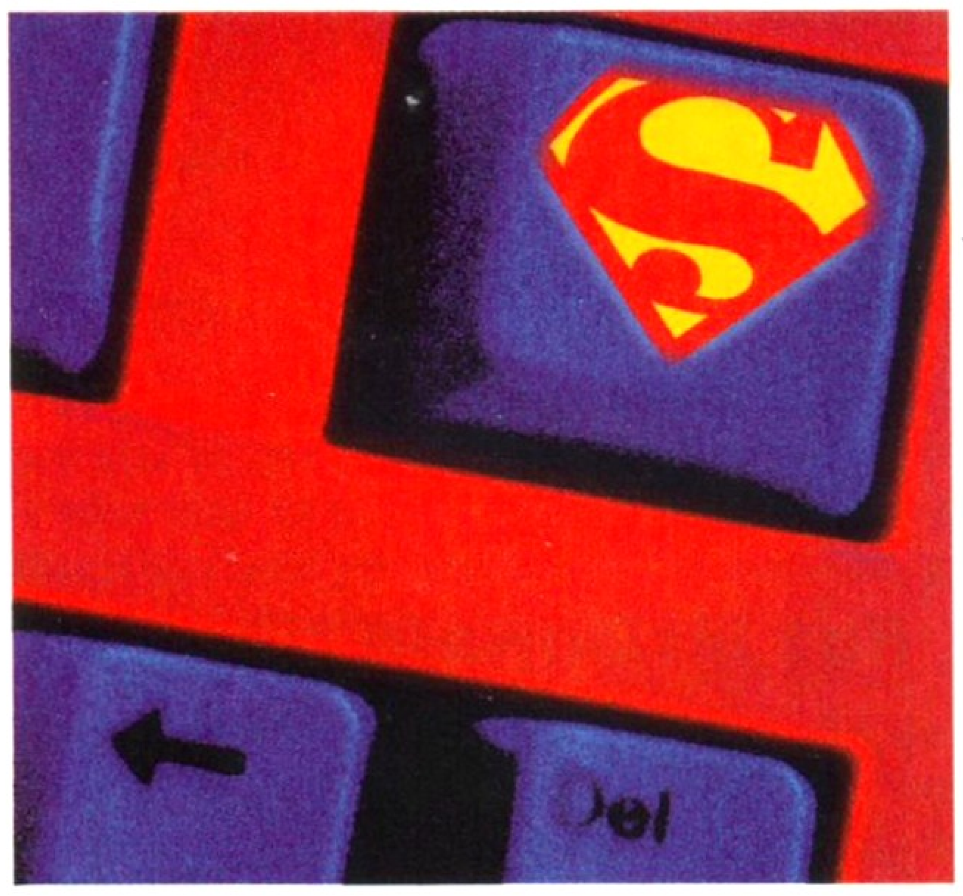
IN PUBLIC DOMAIN

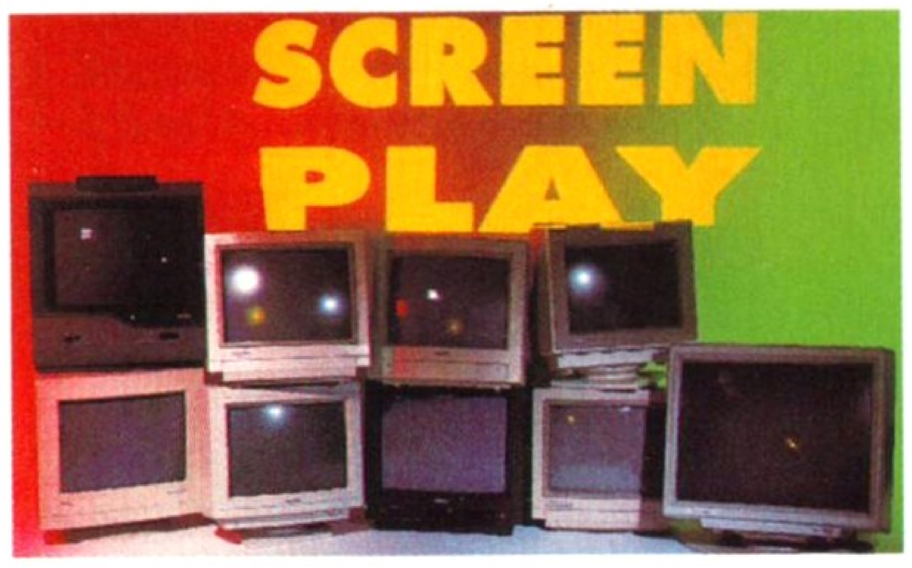
The world of the PD Demo comes under close scrutiny once more. Graphics, animations, music, it's all here.

Give your A500 Super Power!

The A500 might not be made any more – but you're a fool if you think it's anything but alive and kicking.

And here's the proof. A500 expansions are coming out that can make your Amiga unbelievably powerful. Find out where to start in our special feature on PAGE 35





Which monitor?

If you're still using a television to show your Amiga screen display, you're missing out. If you want to upgrade to a new screen, all the info you need starts today on PAGE 118

Which mouse?

If you're buying a new one, first read our review round-up on PAGE 157

Which modem?

Discover the world of comms and pick the best hardware now on PAGE 135

Game reviews in Screenplay

Welcome to Amiga Format!

Hello there and welcome to another issue of the world's best-selling magazine for all Amiga owners.

As ever, we've got a cocktail of the best in reviews and interesting reading lined up for you here, so if you're a new reader we hope you enjoy it.

If you're a regular reader, you may notice a few changes this month. In response to the results of the reader survey we carried out in April, we've decided to tweak the content of the mag to try to make it how you'd like it.

As a result, the game previews have been chopped (well, they were a little bit dull, weren't they?) although there is plenty of news about the upcoming games releases in a more compact form in the News pages.

And there's another point. Far and away the top of the list, when we asked you what you'd like to see more of, was news. So we've expanded the news section to a massive eight pages.



Damien Noonan, Editor

This not only allows us to bring you a few more in-depth stories, but it also gives us the space to tell you a little bit more about the people who are making things happen behind the scenes in the Amiga world. And we're kicking off with a biggie: Kelly Sumner, the new MD of Commodore UK, spoke to us at length and has told us some pretty interesting stuff: give it a read!

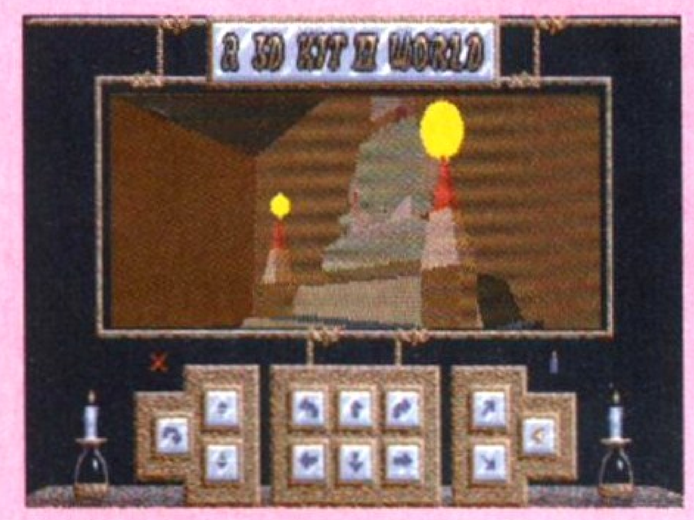
Elsewhere in the magazine, you might notice a quite remarkable concentration of complete buyers' guides and review round-ups. These also came out as very popular in the survey, so we're packing them in. There's monitors, mice and modems this month, and more to follow next time.

Always remember, if you have ideas for what you'd like in the mag, please write!

COVERDISK over the page...

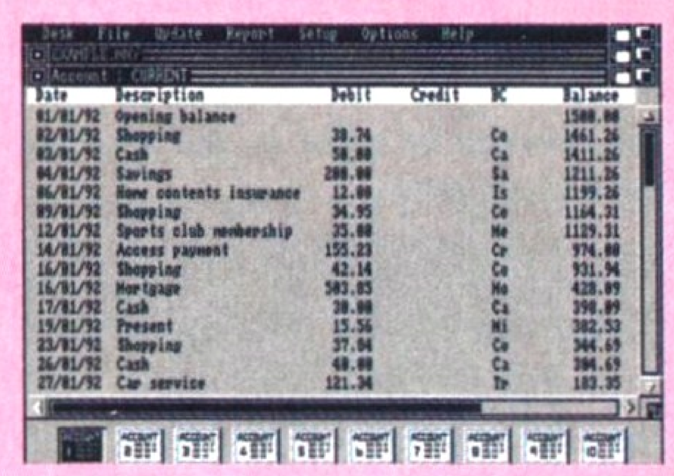


3D Construction Kit



Get involved in the weird and wonderful world of game creation with Incentive/Domark's amazing three-dimensional game-making demo

Personal Finance Manager Plus demo



If you want to keep track of your spending, this could be the answer. Try out the latest accounts system from Microdeal and see if it suits...

The Degrader

Downgrade your system to run more software

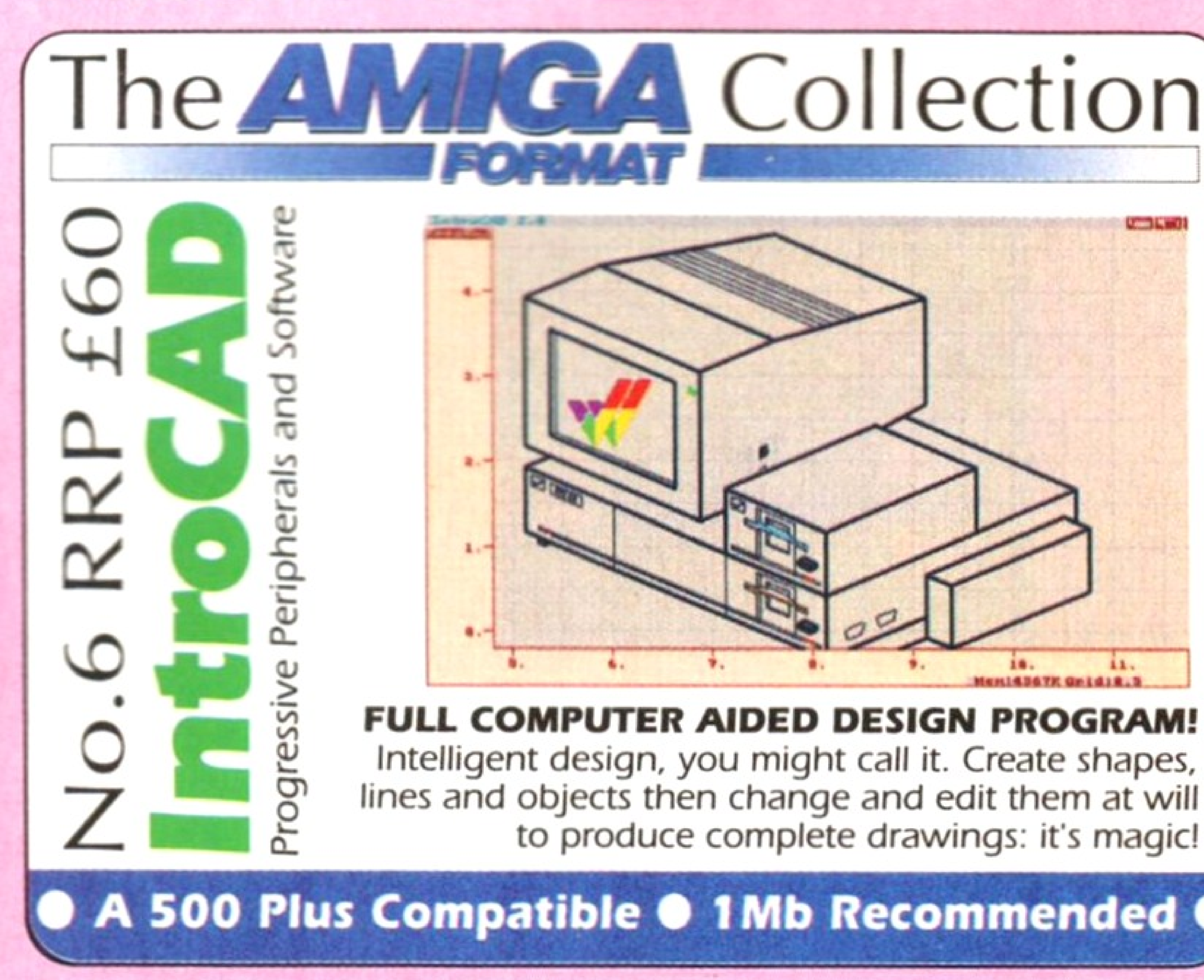
Disk logger 1.3

Catalogue what's on each of your floppies

EOTB2 Char Ed

Stuck on Eye of the Beholder 2? Try this!

and on p11... IntroCAD



The sixth in The *Amiga Format* Collection series of COMPLETE, FULL-PRICE PACKAGES, try your hand at CAD or structured drawing!



Coverdisk

Pat McDonald brings you all the information to get the most out of your Coverdisk possible.So glance through these pages and you'll soon be wandering in Freescape, cheating at EOTB2 and making all your software more compatible.

3D CONSTRUCTION KIT 2

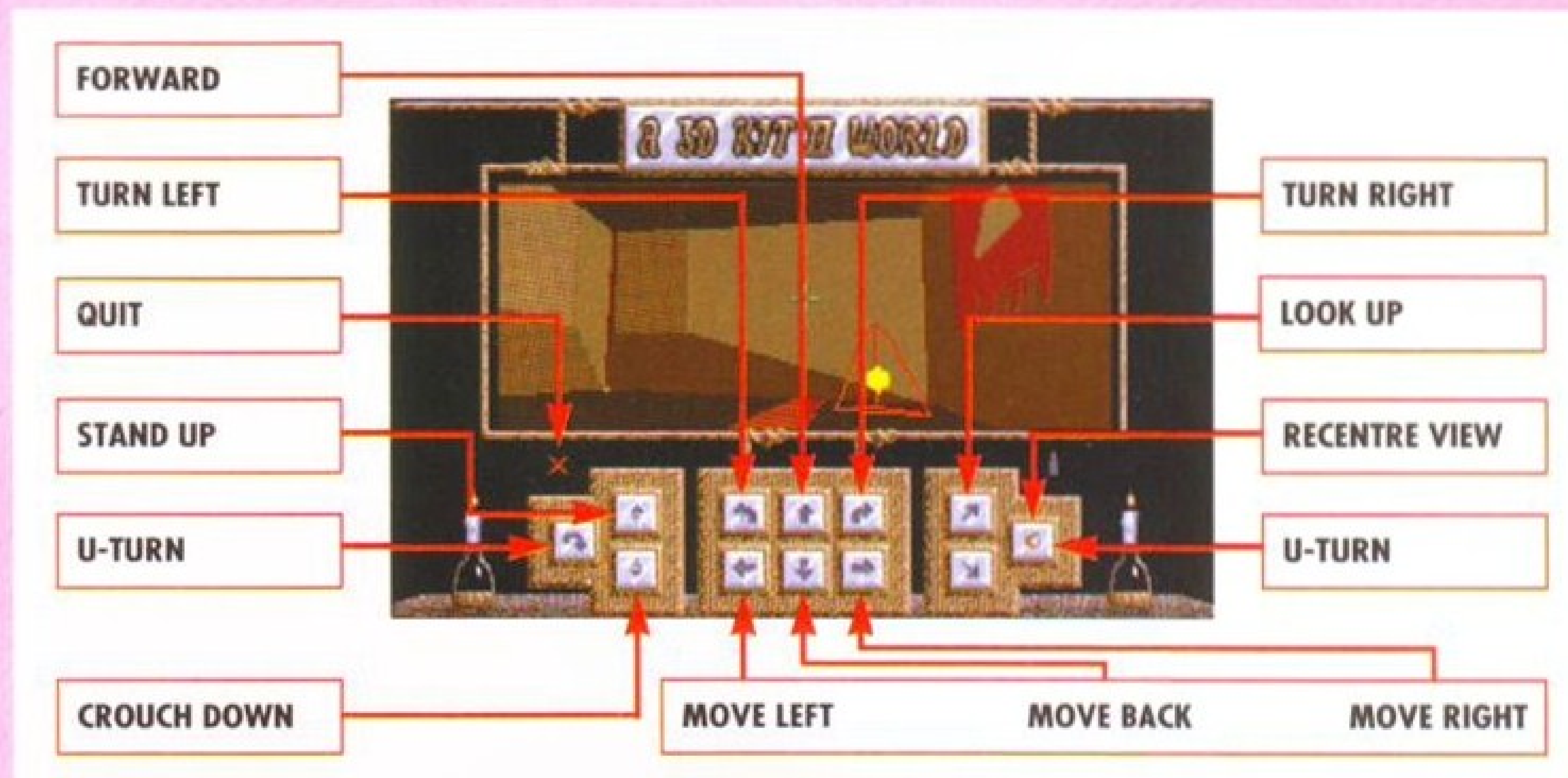
DOMARK/INCENTIVE PAL/NTSC

This game demo has quite a significant pedigree. It all started a few years ago, when a guy called Andrew Smith designed a 3D game system. Today, people happily stick the label 'Virtual Reality' on that type of game, but in the pre-Gibson years that cliché hadn't even been invented. So Andrew called it 'Freescape' instead.

Freescape games were very popular, and were converted to the Amiga when it became popular. Then the designer thought it would be a good idea to write a program that would let people create the own Freescape worlds and games. *3D Construction Kit* was born!



Once you're outside the starting area, you have to puzzle out how to break this barrier in order to get another candle and teleport to the third area.



This demo offers none of the editing facilities – you can only play it as a game, not design your own worlds. However, if you look closely, you will see some of the new features in action.

To return to the game. You are cut off from the outside world. The idea of the game is to collect 10 candles, which will light the way down a tunnel and so let you escape. Simple enough.

You don't have to actually pick up the candles and plonk them down somewhere else. Instead, every time you get a candle, a short video sequence will play of the escape tunnel. The more candles that you collect, the further you'll go down it. Beware though – there is a time limit, because candles don't burn for ever...

Playing this type of game is definitely a 'hands on' experience. True, from the screen shots it doesn't look awesome – but 3D worlds ready to explore can be mightily addictive when you pick up a mouse. Don't start playing unless you have an hour or three to spare.

As I mentioned, the demo is played entirely with a mouse. You can see a mouse pointer whizzing around on the screen. Both of the mouse buttons are used in the game – try clicking the left one when the mouse pointer is in the 3D view screen. Laser beams appear going towards where you were pointing. That's how you shoot things in this game.

Pressing the right button will activate objects (like candles and switches). You need to be close to the object you are trying to activate – but before you can get closer I suppose it would be helpful to know how you move around.

When you click with the left button on any of the direction arrows you will get various different effects. Most of them will just move you in a line, but the two diagonal arrows and the ones next to the eye icon are a bit different. The diagonals rotate you to the left and right, and the eye icons move your view up or down.

Clicking on these with the left button is the fine form of control. Alternatively, use the right mouse button – your movement will be swifter but jerkier. Do enjoy exploring this 3D world of Freescape, and look out for the finished product in September.



Once you've put the disk into an Amiga and double clicked with the left button on the icon, this window will appear. Choose what you want to see by moving the mouse pointer to the icon and double clicking again.

GETTING STARTED

It's very easy to get a Coverdisk going, once you follow these simple instructions. Just place it into any Amiga computer, and either turn it on or (if it is on) reset the machine by pressing Ctrl and the two keys either side of the spacebar. A cut down version of Workbench will load.

You should now see an icon called 'Coverdisk38b'. Move the mouse pointer to it and double click with the left mouse button. A window showing the contents of the disk will appear – again, move to and double click on the item you want to see in order to set it going. This applies to both programs and documentation files.

There is a drawer marked 'EobCharED'. Double clicking on this will bring up another window, showing the contents of the drawer. I guess I could have put these on the main window, but that might have been crowding it a little.

To get rid of any window, click on the box in the top left-hand corner – one click is enough. If you want to get back to Workbench while in the middle of a document then just press Esc. Finally, if you have a printer connected up to your machine, then you should be able to print the documentation files. just click on 'Print files' when the docs are displayed, that is while you are looking at them.

PERSONAL FINANCE MANAGER PLUS

MICHTRON/MICRODEAL PAL ONLY

This is only a demo, but lets you do more than might appear the case at first glance. The original *Personal Finance Manager* was simple enough to understand – it was a database to keep track of your income and expenses. Have Microdeal overly souped-up a simple and effective product?

Not at all. The full program can have up to 10 different accounts set up – one for your bank account, one for your credit card, and so on. Money can be transferred between the accounts – for instance, paying off a credit using a cheque from your bank. Best of all though, *PFM Plus* takes notice of a real-time clock, and will use it to automatically carry out regular transactions like standing orders.

This means you have a better idea of how much money you've got at any one time. Some transactions take time to transfer, but no transaction will be accounted until you confirm it. For instance, you know that a given cheque has cleared.

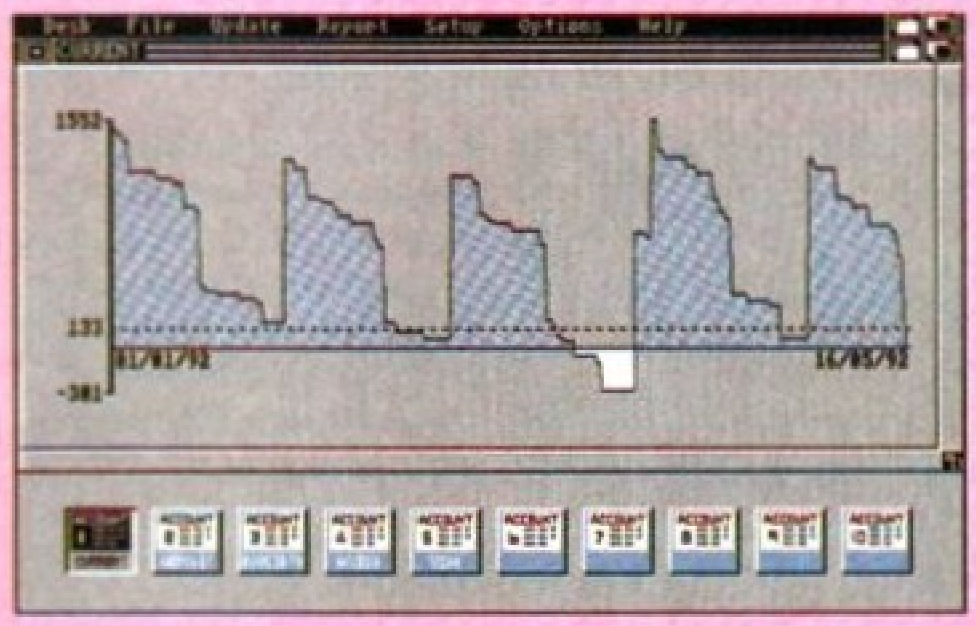
So far, to be honest, these features are no big deal. However, one thing that *PFM Plus* can do is categorise all your expenses, so that you know where most of your money is disappearing to. Add on the very simple graphical interface where you do most of the work with just a mouse, and it's really very good.

But there's even more icing on the cake. *PFM Plus* lets you budget for a given period of time, and matches your budget to actual spending. The comparison makes for very interesting viewing – especially when you are trying to trace your ever decreasing funds.

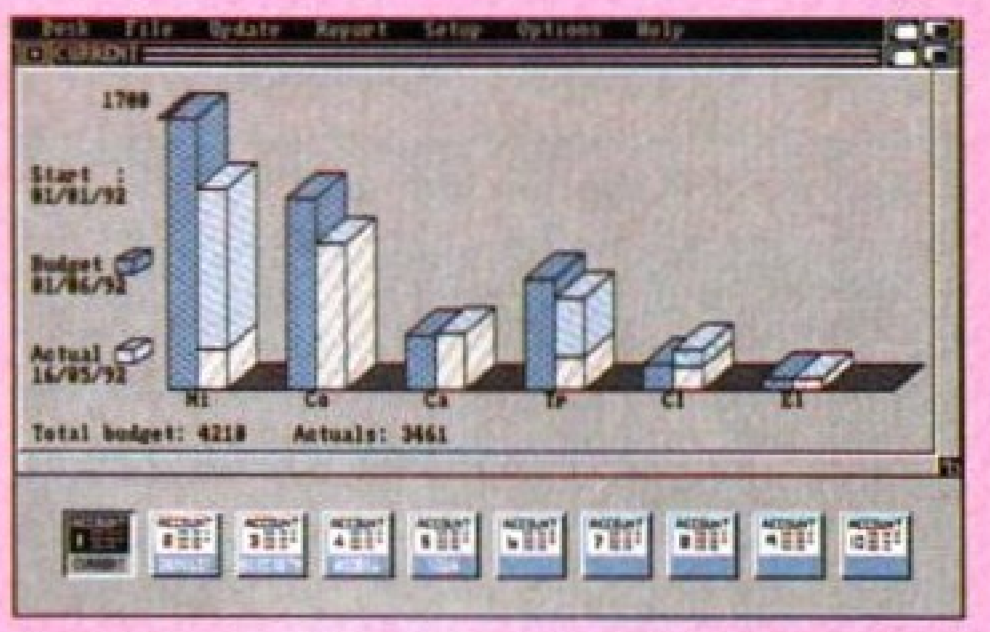
Without a doubt, the best way to learn about the program is to actually sit down and use it. Next to the *PFM Plus* icon is another icon called Readme. Double click on this to get much, much more information than I could possibly supply here. It's more of a hands-on tutorial than an introduction like this.



Once you've loaded the program, *PFM Plus* will wait for you to select an account. Just double click on the boxes at the bottom of the screen, and a list of transactions will appear. Clicking on any of them will let you view and edit them. Notice the Budget Code – this is a short hand form for organising your account into Consumables, Transport and so on.



This is a graphic view of your accounts as they rise and fall – the white area in the middle of the display is when the account dipped into the red. It's more informative to see expenditure as dips on a graph rather than a list of numbers.



This is the one of the more useful displays. Each of the bars is one of the 'Budget Codes' to which transactions are allotted. *Personal Finance Manager Plus* lets you accurately see just how much you are spending on transport, electricity and so on.

THE DEGRADER

CHRIS HAMES PAL/NTSC

All right, the Amiga has been around for quite a long time now, and some of that there older software does not work on later systems with more chip RAM, Kickstart 2, ECS or accelerator cards. Simply because when this software was written, the programmer had insufficient knowledge or foresight to see where the machine was going.

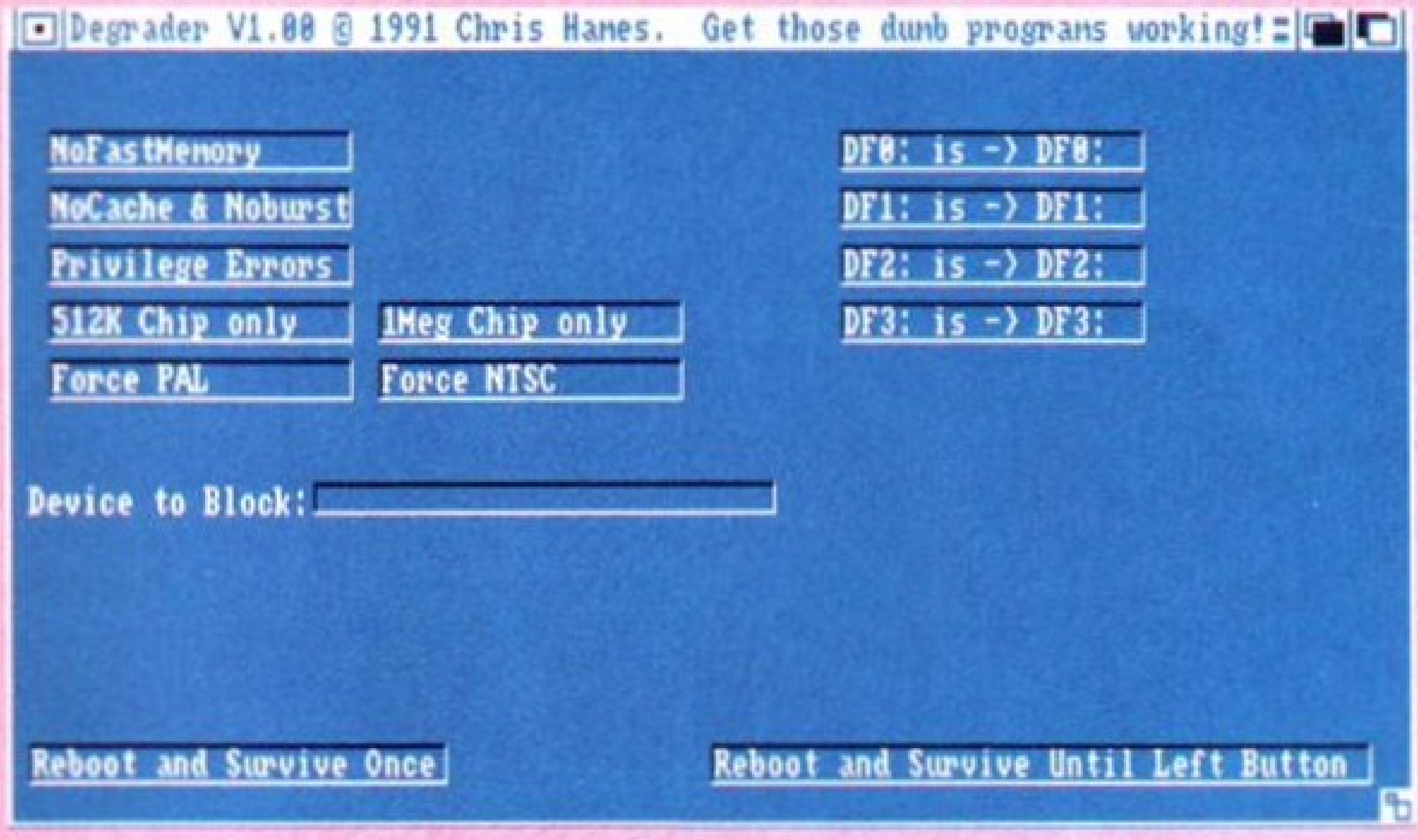
The Degrader isn't a full solution to this problem, but can make some older software work with newer machines – it's a partial solution. The theory behind it is that it turns off some extras, reducing the machine to an older, unexpanded specification.

It can't actually change the hardware in your system, for example it can't replace the Agnus, Denise or Kickstart ROM chips with the older versions. But it can take you back to the days when 512K of chip RAM and one disk drive was the only game in town. It can turn off caching and neutralise machine code instructions that work differently on accelerator cards.

Using it is simple enough. All you have to do is double click on the icon and a screen comes up with all the options that *Degrader* can perform. Select the ones you want and decide how permanent you want to make the degradation. Usually rebooting once is fine.

If the program is working at this point, then the machine will reset with the selections you made active. The screen should go blue, and then reboot – it's a good idea to take the Coverdisk out while this is happening so the machine doesn't start running it again. Instead, try the software that doesn't normally work on your machine – some of it at least should start working!

However, it would be wrong for me to suggest that the program works successfully with all Amiga setups – it doesn't seem to work with my very old GVP hard drive in a new B2000. Also, the NTSC/PAL switch does not seem to work on Workbench 2 machines.



This is the rather uninspiring *Degrader* screen. Just select the options you want with a mouse, and either select reboot once (the machine will revert to normal after two resets) or reset until you press the left mouse button.

If you're not entirely sure what an NTSC/PAL switch is, I'll explain. The TV systems used in North America and Japan are different to the one used in Europe and Australasia – the former is called NTSC, the latter PAL. So Amigas come in two general flavours, ignoring different models like A500, B2000 and so on.

The point is that a lot of more modern Amigas can switch between the two systems. Both systems have their advantages; NTSC has less resolution, but works at 60 frames per second. Which is faster than PAL at 50 frames per second, but then PAL gives you a higher screen resolution.

That's why a lot of programs don't use all the screen – on PAL Amigas, program written for NTSC always has a big blank area at the bottom. NTSC Amigas running PAL programs usually results in the bottom of the screen being below the physical bottom of the TV area.

By changing your Amiga to the system that the software expects, then the screen will always just about fit within the borders of the display. However, there is one flaw – your TV or monitor must have a vertical hold control. If it does, try running *Degrader* and choosing the system that you don't have, then alter the vertical hold very slightly to get a stable picture.

It's beneficial to PAL users because the machine runs slightly faster and those NTSC games occupy the whole screen. It's beneficial to NTSC users because they can see the whole screen area that PAL uses. Useful feature eh? Lots of shareware does this – if *Degrader* does not, track down something that does!

After you've had an Amiga for a few months, you tend to find the number of floppy disks you have lying around gets beyond a joke. What's on this? What's that? How can you possibly remember all the disks' contents?

Of course, you can slap on a disk label and list the contents on there. Unfortunately, when you're right in the middle of a game and need a disk to save the game on, chances are that you haven't got a real blank to hand. So you save your games on an old disk – and the label's out of date straight-away. Peeling them off neatly is difficult.

By no means everyone is so disorganised, but many people are. The reason why I know is because I'm one of them. If you've never been involved with Public Domain disks at all, you would be amazed at how many thousands of unlabelled disks you can obtain over a few months.

DISK LOGGER 1.3

RICH AND STEVE BAMFORD PAL ONLY

This program is designed to bring some order to a chaotic disk collection. You don't have to type lots to use it. It relies mostly on the mouse, to select different labels and ratings for the program to remember about a given disk.

You don't even have to remember what a disk is called – *DiskLogger* will read this information automatically when you insert a disk. However, this will not work with non-AmigaDOS disks, in other words ones with protection.

Although it takes some time to put your disk collection through *Disk Logger*, you'll find it a great help after you've been through that chore. It really does make life easier – it did for me anyway. If you have a printer too, so much the better.



Before you start using *DiskLogger*, you have to select a database file already created on the program. There is one on the Coverdisk called NoName.DLOG (the default name) so just click on Proceed to get into the program.



Here's the main work screen of the program. To view through the database, click and drag the top slider – this will take you back and forward through your disk collection. The bottom slider controls the personal rating you give to the disk – how good you think it is.



This is the Select screen, used for editing the comments you make about a particular disk. Just click in any of the boxes, use the Del and backspace keys to delete what's there and type in your own comment instead.

Eye of the Beholder 2 is one of my favourite games. It's got atmosphere, action and requires a bit of strategy to get further. It's a shame, though, that you can start a game well, get so far – and then get stopped by a puzzle because the character party just isn't up to the challenge.

It's a very easy program to use too. Just double click on the Coverdisk icon, and the front end of the program will load. From here you can load a game save file (off the disk you normally save games to – you'll have to take the Coverdisk out) and edit certain parts to help you out on your quest. Then you save the edited version back to the game save disk. Simple eh?

At first glance, this program appears to have no 'Quit' option. However, if you press the key to

EOBCHARED

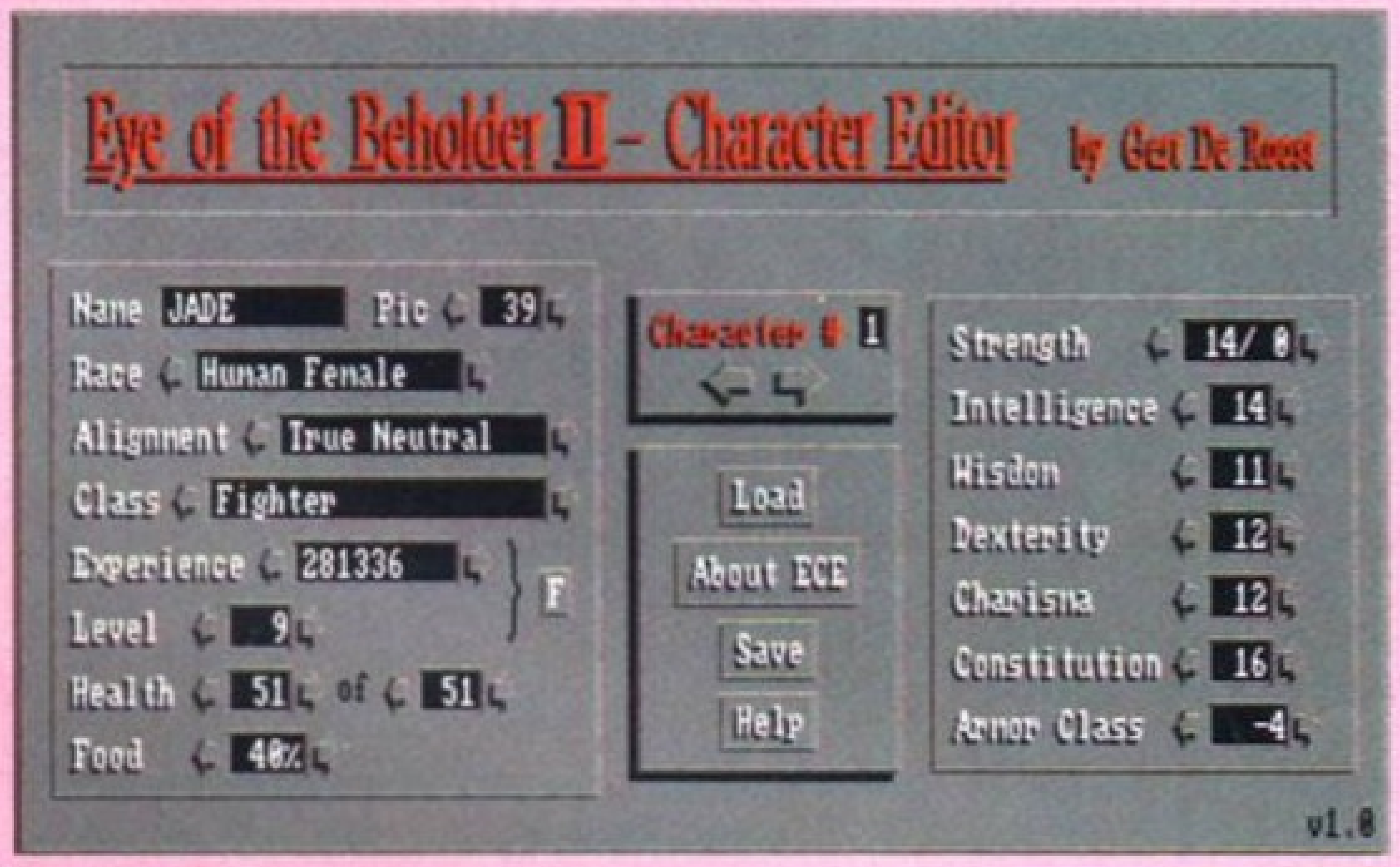
GERT DE ROOST PAL ONLY

the left of the spacebar and Q simultaneously, you'll get back to the Coverdisk. The About option just tells you when the program was written, by whom and with what. The Help option just tells you to look at the Readme file.

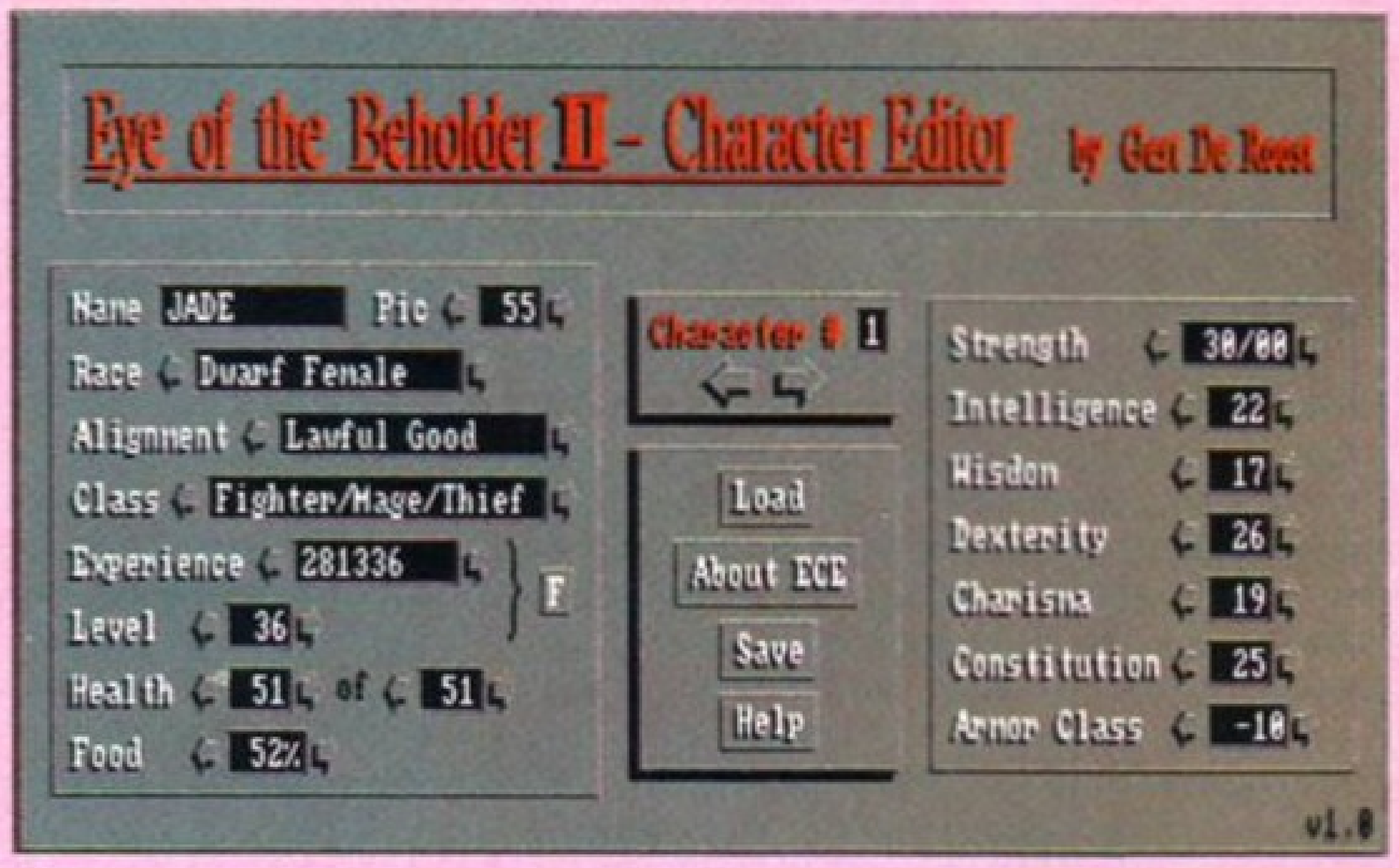
Here's how it works. All of the statistics of one party member will be displayed. Most of them have an arrow to either side. Click on the left arrow to make a statistic go down, and on the right to make it increase. Gaining experience points and gold has never been easier! If you click with the right mouse button rather than the left the values will change much faster than using the left.

When you click on the left and right buttons under character '#', the particular character you are editing will change. The character '#' often means 'number'. To change the name of a character, click in the Name box, use Del and backspace to erase what's there, then type in the new name.

Beware of making changes that are too large. While playing the game proper you get more experience points, strength boosts and so on. If a value gets too big, it will wrap around and become negative. More caveats to beware when using the program can be found in the Readme document – do at least browse this before using the program.



Here's a totally typical *Advanced Dungeons and Dragons* character. Mostly brawn with average brains, not very tough. But after a few mouse clicks, it's very easy to turn her into something totally different.



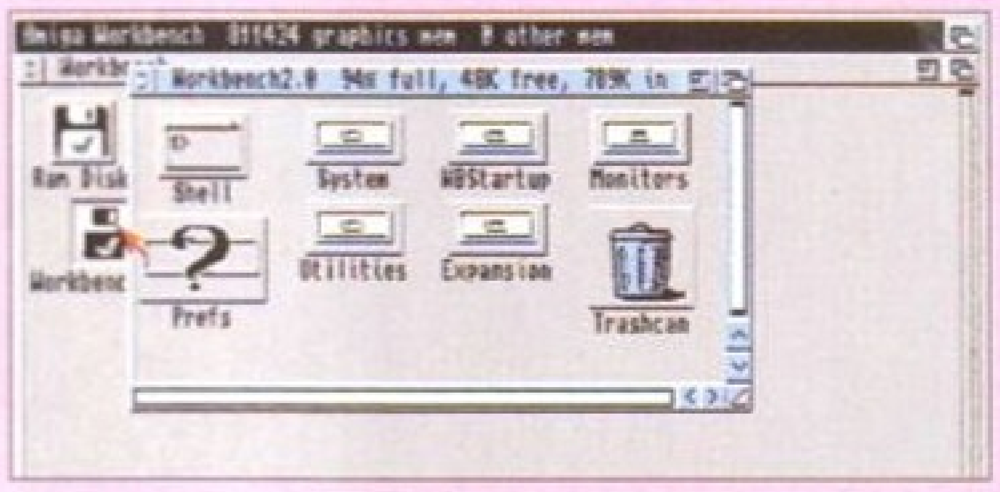
The same character, having become a Dwarf Female of immense capabilities. Stronger than the average god and with a wide range of talents, and mightily experienced with it. Kick in an evil dragon today!

Using Your **Coverdisk**

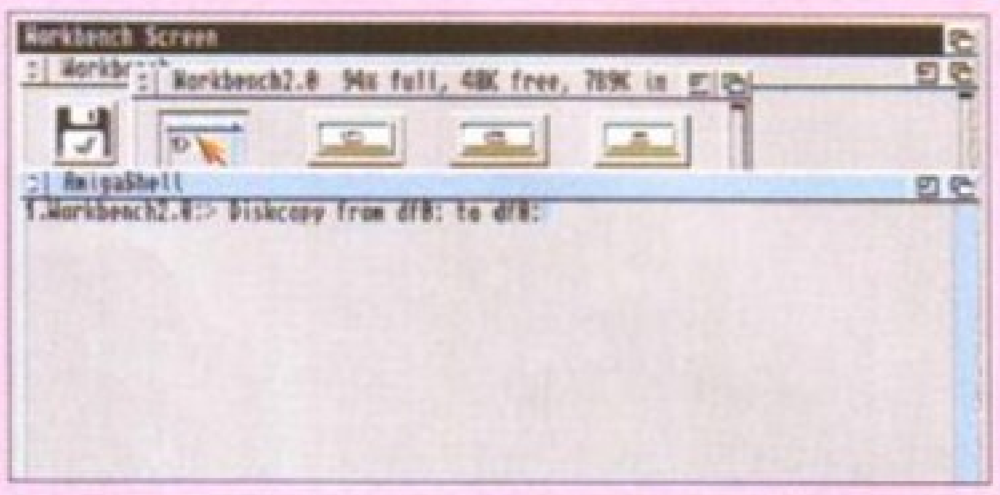
1. Always write-protect your disk. Move the tab so that a hole is showing.
2. Copy the Coverdisk and use the copy, not the original. This may sound like a complicated task, suitable only for techno buffs, but it's surprisingly simple to do. Just follow the copying instructions given below.
3. Read the instructions when using the programs.

Backing up your Disk

There are two ways of making a copy of your disk, and this is the easy one. Don't be daunted by the fact that you need to use the Shell or CLI: it's actually a lot easier than you might think. Just follow these simple steps...



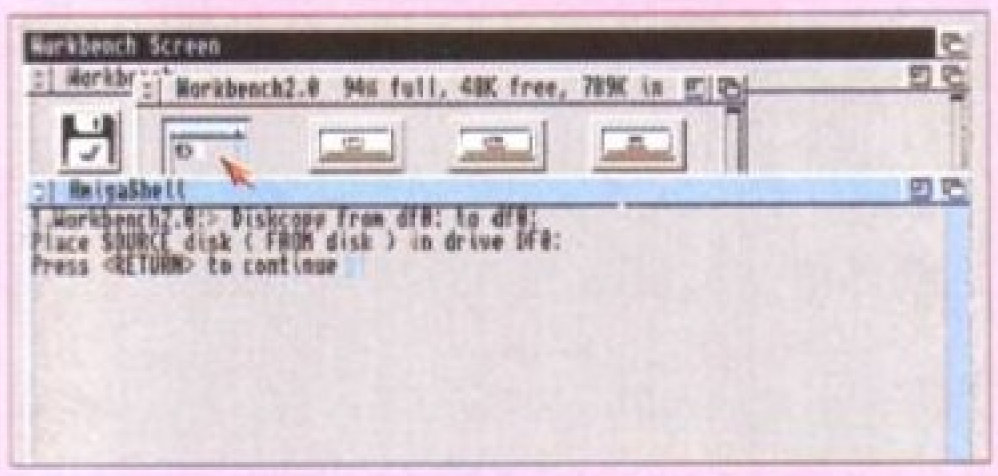
1 Load your Workbench disk. Open the disk, find the icon that says Shell or CLI and double-click on it.



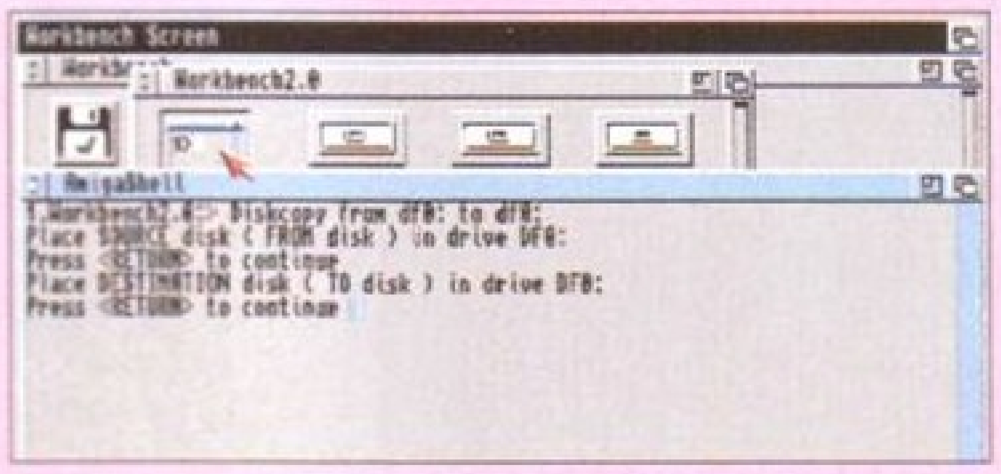
2 When the Shell window appears and the drive light is out, type in:

```
Diskcopy from DF0: to DF0:
```

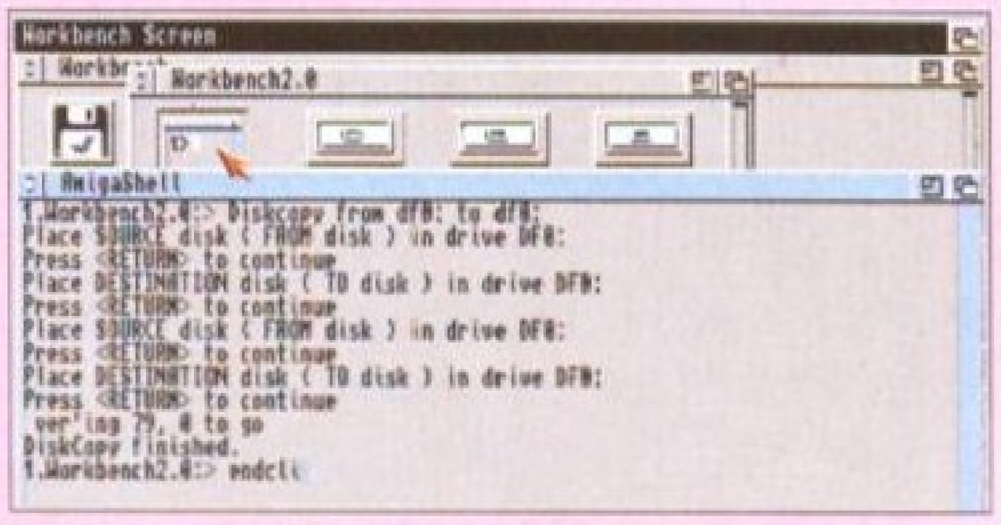
and press Return.



3. The Amiga will now ask you to insert the 'source' disk. It means the disk you want to copy, so put the Coverdisk in the drive and press Return.



4. Wait for a while and it will read all the information off the Coverdisk, telling you how far it has got. Then it will ask you to insert the 'Destination' disk. Put the disk you want to copy your Coverdisk on to in the drive and press Return. Note that the disk does not actually need to be formatted all ready.



5. Put the source disk and destination disk in a couple more times when the Amiga asks for them. When it says 'Diskcopy Finished' just type in:

```
endcli
```

to get out of the Shell or CLI. You may have to put the Workbench disk in again. Now your copy is ready!

DISK PROBLEMS?

If you have a problem with the disk – and you're sure the disk is in full working order – then you may need a little help. If you ring us on any Tuesday and ask to speak to Pat McDonald, he will do his best to help you. Please understand, giving this sort of advice is time-consuming and we are very busy people, so only call if you really have to and do be considerate if we can't talk to you just then. If the problem is particularly complex it is better to send it to us in written detail. It will then be dealt with in the Workbench pages of the magazine.

BE CAREFUL!

We do our best to check that the programs on the ***Amiga Format*** Coverdisk are simple to use and have no known viruses. We cannot usually answer complex telephone queries on the software (see the Disk Problems? box) and we do not accept liability for any consequences of using the numerous programs that are on the disk.

COPYRIGHT

Unless it is specifically stated, the programs on the Coverdisk are not in the Public Domain and the copyright remains with the author of the program.

Because some of the programs on the Coverdisk are not PD, selling or distributing them without the author's specific permission is an infringement of copyright.

Disk not working?

We duplicate nearly half a million disks every month. Out of all of these, obviously a few will be faulty. If the disk or any of the programs will not load or run properly, there may be a problem. Don't panic!

First try using the *DiskDoctor* utility on your Workbench disk to rescue it before sending it off for a replacement. Full details of *DiskDoctor* can be found in the user manual that came with your machine.

However, if your Coverdisk is faulty, you should send it back INCLUDING AN SAE for a free replacement within a month of the cover date to:

Amiga Format **September Disk**
DisCopy Labs
Unit A, Westmarch
London Road
Daventry
Northants
NN11 4SA

Remember to include that stamped, addressed envelope!



This is IntroCAD!

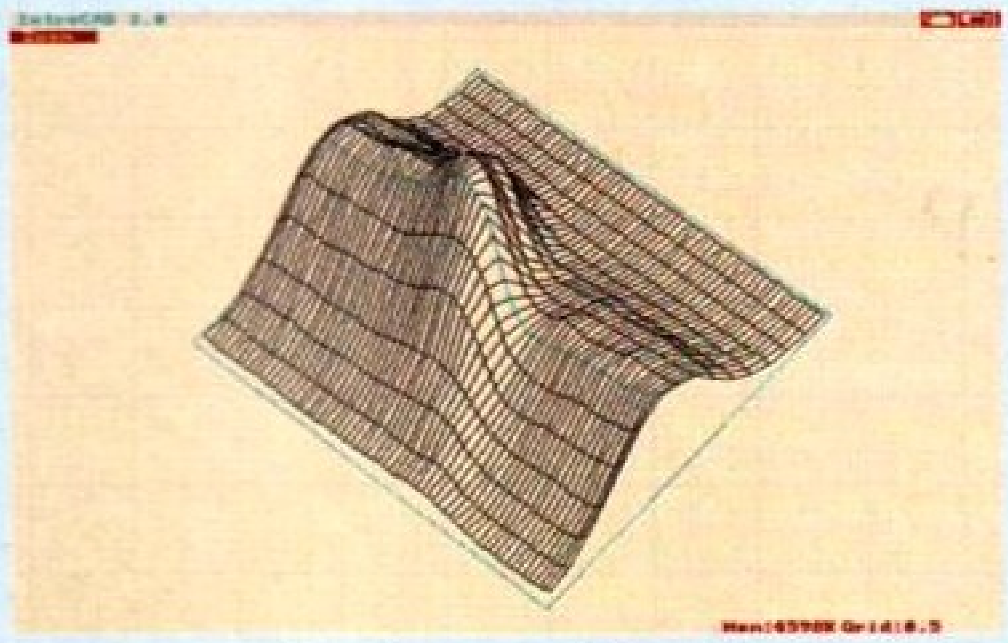
Welcome to the world of computer-aided design. If you've never come across a CAD program before, then you might think it's not really the program for you. However **Pat McDonald** will explain why you will soon find it an invaluable piece of software.

COMPUTER AIDED DESIGN, that's what CAD is all about. In the mid Seventies, a lot of people started thinking about how computers could help in design work. The obvious area was new technology. Ever-more complicated electronic-circuit diagrams were needed to make ever-more complex computers!

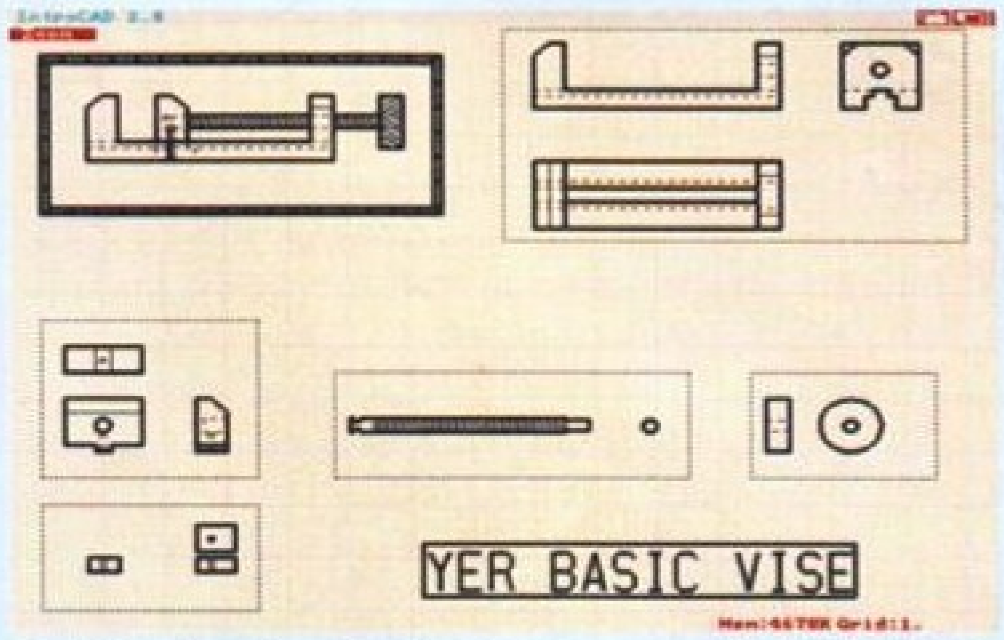
But that was the beginning – today many people in different areas of design use computers to put their ideas on to paper. From shoes to shuttle cocks, every-day items are now born on computer screens rather than a draughting board. Not because it's trendy or fashionable, but because it's actually easier, once you have learned how to use CAD programs.

The real advantage of CAD systems is that you can save commonly used parts of a design (nuts and bolts in engineering; belts and buckles in fashionware; components and links for electronic work) on to disk. Rather than having boxes stuffed with Letraset, you can have commonly used components ready to slot into a design at the point and click of a mouse. And they take up much less space on a floppy disk too!

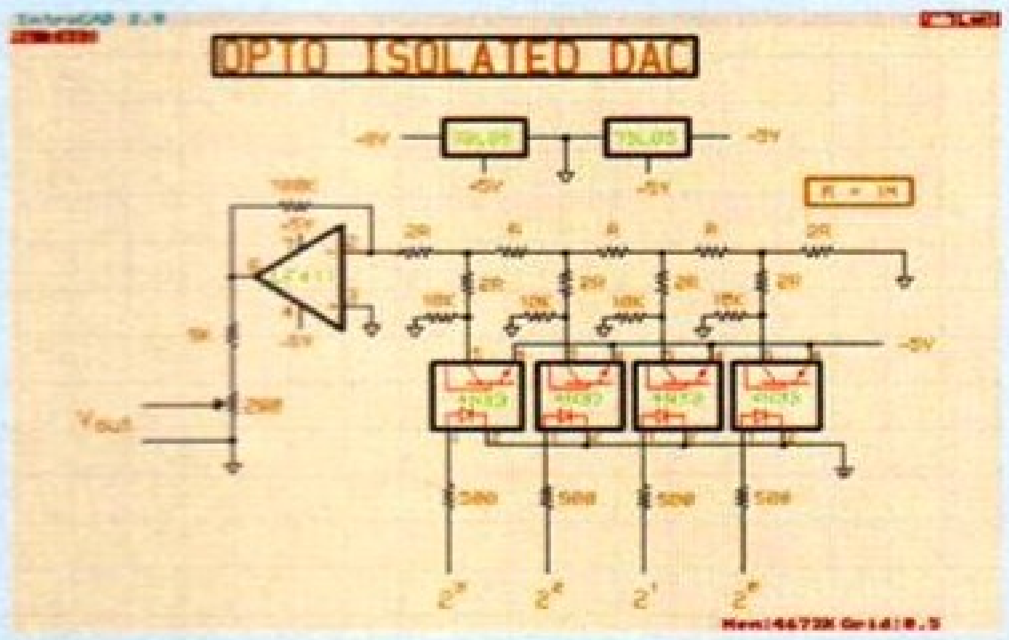
Why can't you just use a paint program like *Deluxe Paint* for this? Paint programs work at the resolutions of the Amiga – when you magnify the screen, all you get is a lot of fuzzy pixels. Printers and plotters can work at much higher resolutions than video displays can – you are lucky to get 50 dots per inch (dpi) on a video screen, but laser printers can print at 300 dpi without any problem. Which means that you can print *Deluxe Paint* images at the size of a postage stamp without losing detail! What's the point of having a really good printer if you can't create images with lots of printed detail, as big as the printer can manage?



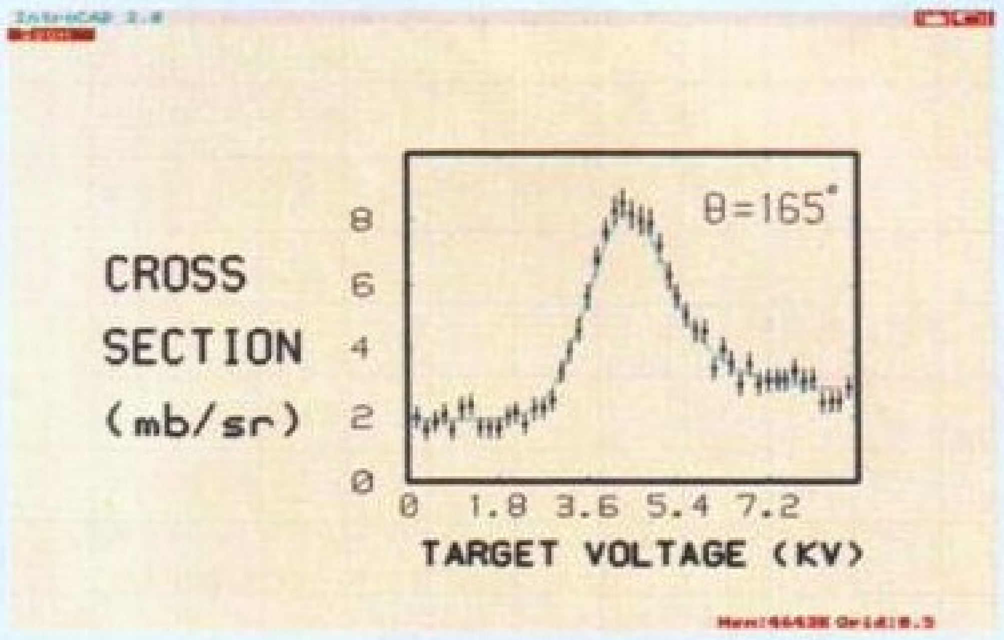
CAD is a powerful tool in terms of design illustration – it's a lot easier to appreciate 3D models if you have a view of them. This sort of design is not usually used commercially.



Traditional engineering design relies on very accurate scale drawings of a final design. CAD's ability to present 'zoom' images helps with fine detail.



Electronic schematic diagrams are theoretical – they show how circuits should be connected. They don't represent how a piece of gadgetry looks – only how it works.



Because CAD images are printed at the full resolution of the printer, you can design printed illustration for technical manuals too.

That's where CAD programs come in. You can zoom right into a picture, add some detail, and zoom out again. Now you won't be able to see the detail on the computer monitor – but it will appear when you print or plot the drawing.

But before you get carried away with the idea of CAD, a few notes on what *IntroCAD* can't do. Some very expensive CAD programs help with costing out designs – you can type in how much the parts cost, and the program will tot these up for an error-free grand total. *IntroCAD* can't do this, nor does it let you work on one part of a grand design without viewing all the others – the so called 'layer' feature.

IntroCAD is just about drawing and creating, rather than the professional needs of the working designer. But if you've never come across a CAD program before, then this is a fine introduction to the subject – and once you've found your way around one, the pro systems will be a lot easier to master.

Finally, and most annoying, is that you can't unzoom from a picture. Instead you have to go back to the full view of the whole picture. This is not too bad (*IntroCAD* is pretty fast at redrawing even complex images) but it is a pain at times.

Don't take this program too seriously then. If you have a printer, you will probably be very impressed with the quality of the print out compared to that produced with a paint program. If you have a plotter, then drawings will take longer to produce – but the quality is even better.

IntroCAD is a usable program. You can create illustrations with it, for many different areas of design. It's regrettable that it runs in interlace (see 'Flickery or what?' on the following page for more information).

If you find it indispensable, do let us know. We are especially interested in submissions of clip art for use with the program, which may find themselves on to future Coverdisks if enough interest is show.

I hope you find the following documentation is comprehensive enough for you. The best way to get to grips with the program is not to pore over the magazine for hours on end – the best way is to load the program and experiment as much as you can. Well, what are you waiting for?

GETTING STARTED

1 The most important thing to do with *IntroCAD* – as with all Coverdisks – is to back it up. Make a copy of it on a blank disk, and use the copy. If you're not sure how to do this, Page 9 has the details.

2 Format two blank disks. Call one 'Parts', and the other 'Drawings'. This is for your future work. It's not vital, but it will save grief if you've just finished some work and cannot find a blank disk to save it on to.

3 Switch on your Amiga, insert the *IntroCAD* disk and wait for the Workbench on it to load. Double click with the left mouse button on the disk icon, and again on the *IntroCAD* icon.

4 Work through the tutorial on Page 14, 'Your first design'. This will give you some confidence in using the commonly used tools and gadgets of *IntroCAD*.

5 Play around with the features detailed overleaf, and get a feel for what they do. Most of them will be self evident – but the reference is there for completeness, so feel free to return to it when you don't understand something.

IntroCAD at a glance

These pages are intended for reference purposes, especially looking up the menu items and what they do. In addition, the quirks of how IntroCAD uses the mouse are explained.

PROJECT



New: clears the current drawing. A warning requester appears to prevent any accidental erasure.

Open: loads a previously saved file from disk. The program will expect the drawing to be in the 'Drawings' directory on the *IntroCAD* disk - but you can load and save to wherever you want.

Save: does a save of the whole drawing, using the most recently used file name. Don't use this unless you have already done a 'Save as].

Save As: saves the whole drawing, but asks you to put in a file name first.

—>ADraw: Save in *Aegis Draw format.* Many programs can load drawings saved in this form, for example *Professional Page. IntroCAD* cannot load *Aegis Draw* images.

Plot: output drawing to a plotter. *IntroCAD* will ask you if you want to plot just what is on screen, or the whole drawing. The program will then display a list of the three plotting systems it supports. If you are not sure what your plotter expects, select HPGL (Hewlett Packard Graphics Language) as most plotters use this. Then the plot options appear – see the Printing and Plotting box.

Print: output drawings to a printer.

About: displays a little message about the program's author and publishers.

Titlebar: hide or reveal the titlebar at the top of the screen.

Quit: stops IntroCAD. If you have made a change since the last time you saved, the program will ask if you want to save your work first.

PART



Open: loads a part from disk. *IntroCAD* defaults to looking in the Parts directory on the *IntroCAD* disk, but you can load or save them anywhere.

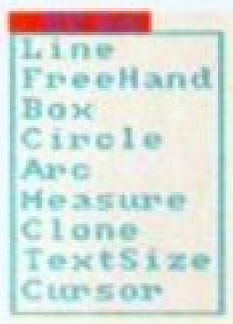
Save: saves the currently selected Part to disk, using the last Part name used. If no Part was selected, the program saves the one that was drawn last.

Save As: first asks for a file name, then saves the currently selected Part. If no Part has been selected, the last Part drawn will be saved (a very common mistake).

Group: very powerful function this. After this has been selected, the program will prompt you to select individual primitives (lines, boxes, circles – the building blocks) and they will then be joined together into a Part.

Ungroup: used to split a Part up into its separate components. Use with some caution, as it takes a long time to Group them back together again. However, this isn't that important – it's just tedious to keep making Groups.

DRAW



Line: draw a line from A to B. Your first click is the start point of the line. You can then stretch it to where you want it to end, and click again with the left mouse button.

FreeHand: this lets you draw any shape you like, while you hold down the left mouse button.

Box: click on the screen – that's the corner of the box. Move the mouse and click again – that's the opposite corner of the box.

Circle: these are no problem. Your first click is the centre of the circle – move the mouse to fix the radius, and click again to finally draw it.

Arc: this works in a similar way to the Circle tool, but only draws part of a circle (an Arc). Click once to fix the centre of the arc, and move the mouse to fix the centre – then click again. Now move the mouse to draw the arc – nothing will actually be fixed until you click the button for the third time.

Measure: this doesn't actually draw anything! It feels like you are drawing a Line, but instead the length and angle of the line.

Clone: this will prompt you to select something that you have already drawn. Once you have done this, you can move around the Clone, and click the left mouse button to draw it somewhere else.

TextSize: prompts you to draw a box, which then disappears. The size of the box will be used for the size of all future text – until you select TextSize again.

Cursor: used to position the cursor for typing in text. Always select Cursor before you start typing at the keyboard!

COLORS



Modify Colors: this lets you change any of the 16 colours that the *IntroCAD* program can display, into any of the 4,096 colours of the Amiga's pallette.

Save Colors: this saves the current selection of 16 colours on to the *IntroCAD* disk to alter the colours again.

LINETYPE

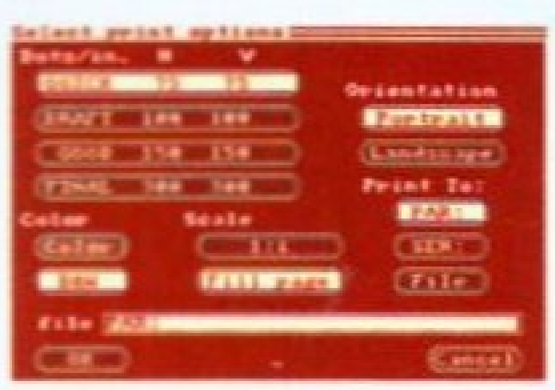


Very simply, this menu option sets the type of line that *IntroCAD* uses for drawing objects. You can have thin lines, dotted lines, dashed lines, and thick lines. Unfortunately you cannot set the thickness of the line as a measurement, for instance a quarter of an inch. Instead you only have the preset sizes on this menu.

PRINTING AND PLOTTING



The ploter prefs screen: plotters always work at their best.



The printer prefs window: not all printers have all qualities.

The whole idea behind CAD is that the design doesn't stay on the computer – you print it out or plot it. A plotter, for those unfamiliar with the term, is a mechanised drawing board fitted with at least one pen. By linking it to your Amiga and running *IntroCAD*, it will draw (plot) your design out just like a blueprint.

The first step is to select 'Print' or 'Plot' from the File menu. After that, you will be asked to select a driver. There are many dozens of printer drivers on *IntroCAD* – they only work with this program.

Unless you know which printer type your particular printer can work to, finding the right one is a matter of trial and error. *IntroCAD* only supports three plotter types – of these HPGL (Hewlett Packard Graphics Language) is by far the most common.

After that, an options window is displayed. From here you can select the quality of print (better qualities take longer), where *IntroCAD* should send the print information to (SER: means serial port, PAR: means parallel port) and the scale and orientation of the drawing. In addition, Plotting supports either manual pen changes – the program will ask you to change pens – or automatic. Finally, don't try to run the program with any different printer or plotter drivers – they just won't work. The only drivers which do work with it are what you get on the disk.

OPTIONS



Redraw: this has two sub options, 'Now' and 'Auto'. Now will just redraw the screen then and there – often when you have deleted primitives, the display will be corrupted, and a Redraw is necessary. Auto will make the program redraw every time something is added or taken away – this slows it down horribly, so don't select it unless you have an accelerator.

Zoom: used to dive into a picture. The program will ask you to mark out a box, and the screen will be redrawn at the dimensions of the box.

Slide: a bit difficult to describe, but easy to use. The program will prompt you to draw a line (which will then disappear). The first point of the line is like an arrow head – the screen will slide over in that direction. The length of the line is the amount to slide the screen. Useful when moving around a zoomed-in drawing.

FullPict: redraws the whole design, just fitting it into the display.

Rulers: this is a switch. Selecting it the first time will remove the rulers with the measurements from the left and bottom of the screen. Selecting it again will bring them back. There is a bug in the program which prevents them returning if you have changed the Grid (change the Grid to Plain, and they will return).

Grid: there are six sub-options on this. 'Off' does just that – it turns off the grid. 'Plain' is for a square grid. 'Projection 1' is a pseudo Isometric 30 grid – you can Snap to it without distortion. 'Projection 2' has similar properties, but puts on an Isometric 60 gird. Isometric 30 puts up a grid of 30 degrees – there are problems with snapping to this accurately, as with Isometric 60 (60 degrees to the horizontal).

Crosshair: simply changes the mouse pointer into a crosshair.

Snap To: this selects what destination will be used to snap to. You can either Snap to Grid (which means that future drawing will always intersect with the Grid pattern) or Snap to Drawing, which, if part of an object is close enough, will snap future objects to the nearest point on the object.

GridMesh: this alters the size of the grid in relation to the page. You can't have a grid that is below a certain size.

ShowXY: this brings up a display at the bottom of the screen, showing the mouse pointer's present position, its position relative to the last point drawn. Selecting it again removes the display.

ShowMem: brings up a display of the amount of unused memory left to your system. Selecting it again removes the display.

ShowTool: this is set to a default. It displays the currently selected tool at the top left of the screen. Selecting ShowTool once actually removes it! Selecting it again brings it back.

MouseSpeed: this is used to take the mouse up in resolution (make it slower but smoother). Notice that pressing Alt-Full Stop or Alt Comma has the same effect – you can press these with one hand while your other is drawing with the mouse.

EDIT



Erase: prompts you to select a primitive or group, and then deletes it from the drawing. Pressing the Del key will delete the last object that was drawn.

Size: this has two sub options, 'Free' and 'No Distort'. Either will prompt you to select a primitive or group, and you can then grab a corner and shrink or expand the object. Free lets you distort the shape of objects (for instance, turning circles into elipses) while 'No Distort' keeps the shape of the object intact.

Move: prompts you to select a primitive or group, and then lets you reposition it anywhere you like.

Rotate: has two options, 'Variable' or '90 degrees'. It asks you to select a primitive or group, and then lets you rotate it. The centre of rotation is the centre of an imaginary box which will enclose it. 'Variable' alters the angle of rotation, while '90 Degrees' will flip it through a right angle.

Point: all objects are made up of points joined by lines. 'Point' will prompt you to select a primitive or group, and then a point belonging to it. After that you can reposition the point, to distort the object – cutting a slice out of a circle, for instance.

Color: prompts you to select a primitive or object, and colours it with the selected colour.

SetLType: prompts you to select a primitive or group, and changes it to use the presently selected line type.

Snap: has two sub options, 'Naievely' and 'No Distort'. Naivelly will snap all points of objects you draw from now on are to the destination. No Distort is more useful – for instance, if you wanted to intersect lines on to the edges of a circle.

FLICKERY OR WHAT?

Unless you are running *IntroCAD* on an A3000, you have probably noticed that the screen flickers like mad. This is because it runs in interlace graphics mode. There are four ways solutions;

1) Rapidly wave your hand in front of your face.
2) Wear polaroid sunglasses. This doesn't cut the flicker much, but it does cut down on glare.
3) If you have Workbench 2, 2Mb of chip RAM and a multisync monitor, set Workbench running in interlaced hi-res with 16 colours before running this particular CAD program.
4) Buy a Flicker Free Video card or flicker fixer and multisync monitor. Connect them to your Amiga and *IntroCAD* will be steady as a rock. Your bank balance might not be though.

MOUSE TECHNIQUES

If you've never used a 'serious' program before, you may well get stuck working out how to use the mouse to control the different options. Read on and learn!

MENU SELECT

Press the right mouse button and hold it down. A list of words will appear at the top of the screen – these are the names of different menus. Now move the mouse over the top left-hand side of the screen. Menus of different options will flash past.

Move it back slowly, keeping the right mouse button pressed. As you move over some menu items, they highlight. If you let go, they will be chosen. Others will not highlight straightaway, but will display two or more sub-options – these will highlight, and will be chosen if you let go of the right mouse button. Menu selection is the only time you use the right button like this.

POINT AND CLICK

Select 'Cursor' from the 'Draw' menu. Now move the mouse pointer to somewhere on screen. Click with the left mouse button. Now press a letter or number on the keyboard – it will be put on to the screen at that location. Press the Del key to delete them.

LINE MARK

Select 'Line' from the Draw menu, and move the mouse on the screen. Click the left mouse button and move the mouse – a line should appear from where you clicked to where the pointer is. Click with the left button to draw a line.

EXTREMITY SIZE

Select 'Box' from the 'Draw' menu. Move the mouse close to where you drew the line and click with the left button – move and click again to draw the box. It uses the points that are opposite to each other – drawing circles and making groups use this too.

MULTIPLE CHOICE

Select 'Rotate' from the 'Edit' menu, and 'Variable' from the submenu. Now click near the box you just drew – the mouse pointer will change to the letters 'Y/N' and the box will highlight. Click the left button to select the box.

The right button will highlight the line, and again the pointer will have 'Y/N' on it. Click the left button to select the line. Pressing the right button will abort the whole operation. That's multiple choice – selecting the right object.

Now move the mouse around, and the line or box will rotate around with it. It's a bit like rolling an aircraft while piloting a flight simulator. The 'Arc' function on the Draw menu also uses this type of control.

SELECT AND MOVE

Click near the objects you've been drawing, and select either one. It will disappear and you will have a ghosted outline attached to the mouse pointer. Move the mouse pointer and click with the left button to put it down somewhere else.

The 'Clone' option on the 'Draw' menu works in a very similar manner. Often a 'Move' or 'Clone' will leave the screen in a slightly corrupted state – just select 'Redraw' from the 'Options' menu to restore the screen properly.

The 'Point' option allows you to point and click on any of the points of an object – vertices where lines join together – and edit them.

Your first design

If you've never used a CAD program before, then knowing where to start or what to do is very tricky to work out at first. But fear not, here's a step-by-step guide to using the more common drawing tools to design a simple window on the front of a house.

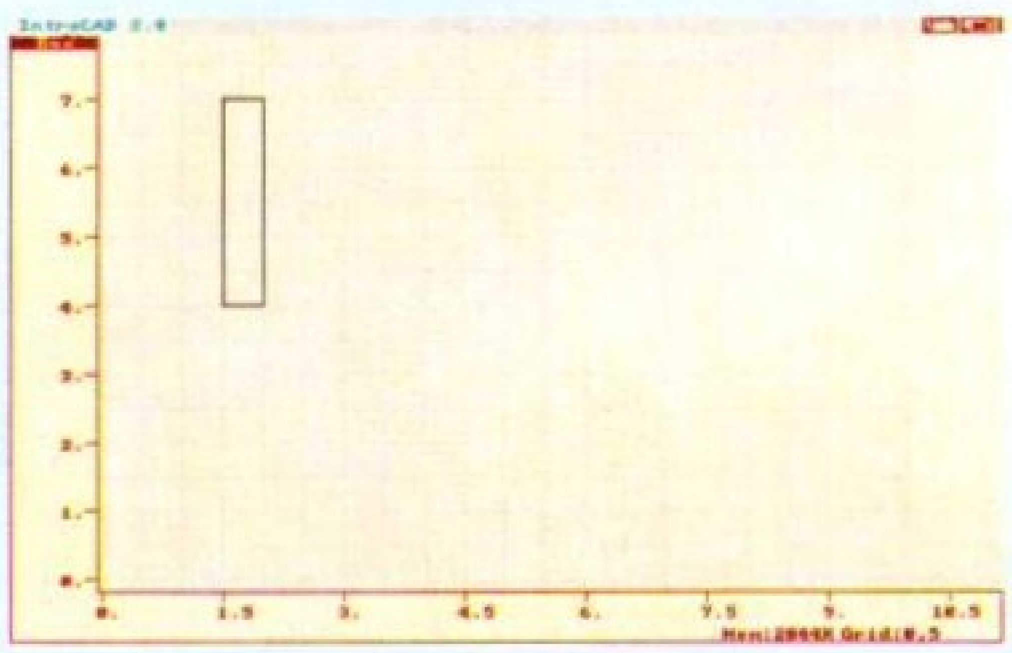
Part 1: find the components

On most drawings there are some repeated elements. On a house you would expect to find more than one window. The best place to start is with some of the elements that are repeated – start small and build up.

On this house, we'll put some Georgian sash windows. These consist of lots of rectangles intersecting to form one big rectangle, with a border surrounding them and a foundation stone at the bottom. Just a lot of boxes really, so the first thing to do is select 'Box' from the 'Draw' menu.

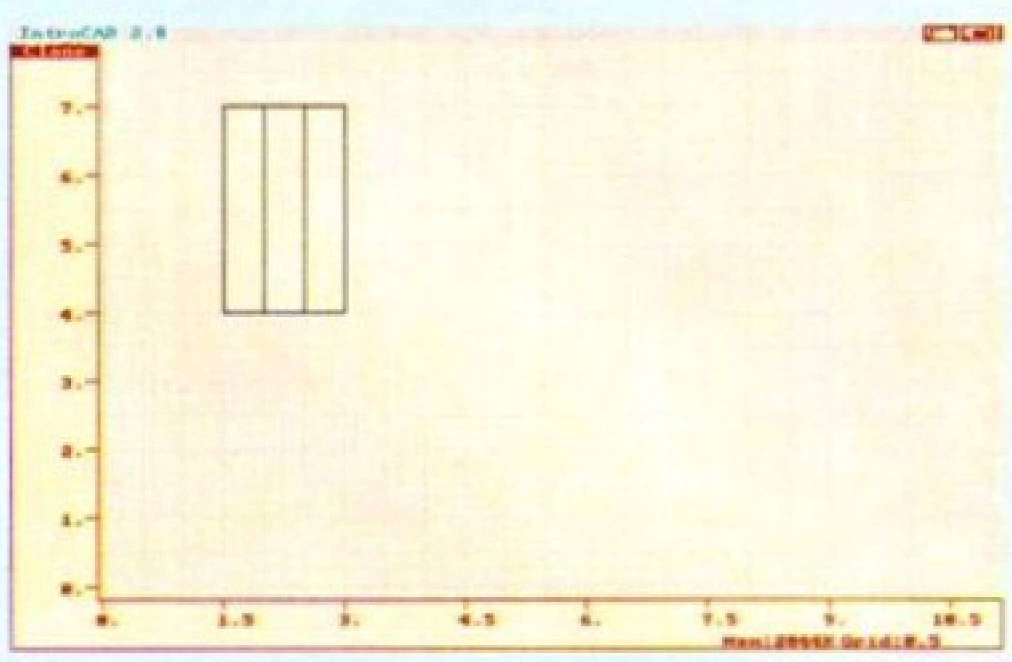
Don't draw anything yet though. These rectangles are going to line next to each other, so it would be wise to put them on top of the grid. So select 'Snap To' from the Options menu, and select 'Grid'. Then select 'GridMesh' from the same menu, and 'Finer' from the submenu. Do this last step twice to get a moderately fine grid.

Now it's time to draw the first box. Click down on the page, and draw out a tall box – do not let go of the left mouse button until you have a tall, thin box. Make it one box wide and six boxes high, to get the proportions right like so:



You could draw three boxes like this, but instead, I'll show you another useful tool. Select 'Clone' from the 'Draw' menu instead. Now click with the left mouse button near the box you have already drawn – *IntroCAD* will ask if this is the correct object to clone.

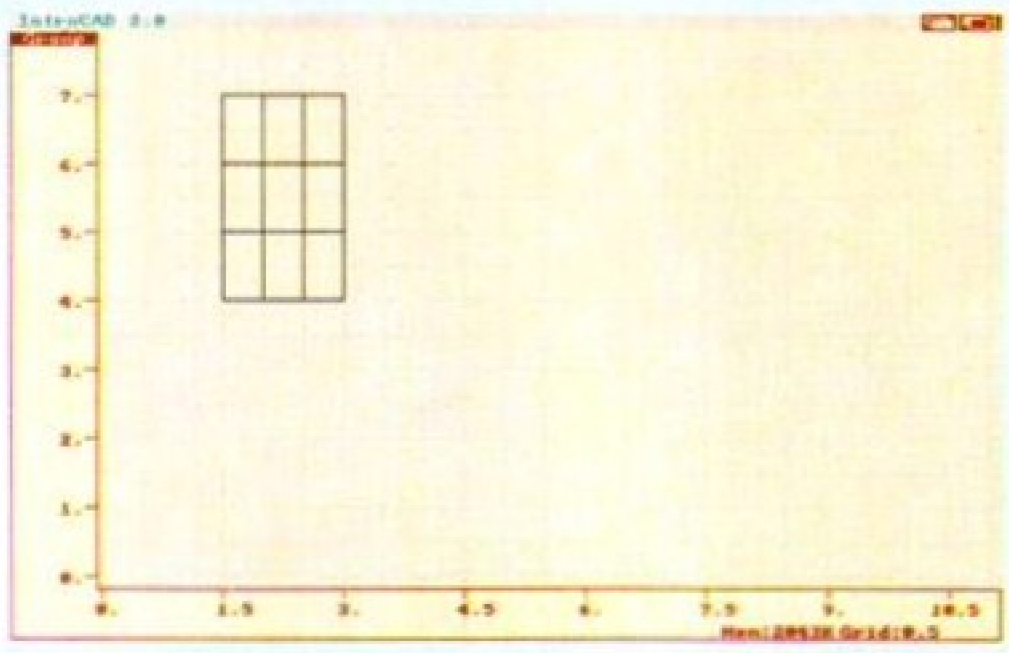
Press the left mouse button again, and move the copy to the left or right of the present box, then stamp it down with a third click. Repeat this process until you have three tall boxes.



Now it's time to do the cross pieces. Select 'Box' again from the 'Draw' menu, and click on the top-left corner of the little group you have. Then drag out a box that's three grid squares wide and two high.

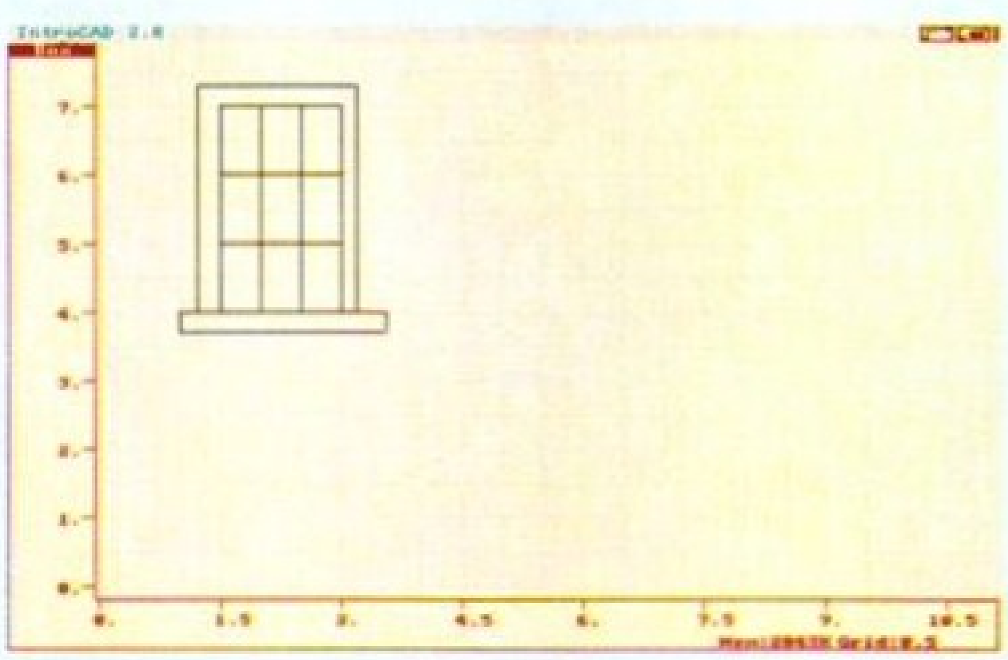
You've got a choice here. Either draw two more boxes or Clone the one you've just drawn? When faced with the dilemma, the resolution demands how many Clone drawings you have to make, and how easy it is to draw them. In this case, it is quicker to just draw two more boxes – but if you're cloning a complex object like a screw thread, then it makes sense to use Clone instead.

Draw two more boxes like the last one – one beginning two thirds up the left-hand side of the starting group, and the other about a third of the way up. You should have a group which form the panes of glass in a window: before we go on, it's probably a good idea to put them together into one object. Select 'Group' from the 'Parts' menu, and click and drag a box around what you have drawn like this:



OK, we have panes of glass but they look pretty silly without a window frame! To draw one in the right proportion though, we'll have to make the grid less attractive. Select 'Snap To' again from the 'Options' menu, and highlight 'Drawing'. Whatever we draw from now on (unless we select 'Snap To' again) will go straight on to the page.

It's time to learn how to tidy up mistakes, so select 'Box' from the draw menu, and draw two more boxes; one around the group you already have, but whose bottom edge is close to it; and another that is wider than the box, but whose top edge is close to the bottom of the window panes:



Doesn't look quite right, does it? It's actually very difficult to perfectly align things at this scale – so first, you'll have to zoom in. Select 'Zoom' from the 'Options' menu, and mark out a box at the bottom left or right of the window (where the boxes overlap). You should be able to see quite a margin of error at this distance. How do you correct it? Simple, just choose the 'Move' option from the 'Edit' menu.

You've now got a choice – 'Free' or 'No Distort'. Normally 'Free' is the preferred option, because you don't have to keep the object the same shape – select 'Free' now.

Only part of the box's outline will appear (because you can see only part of the whole shape. At the corners points will be outlined. Click on one of the ones at the top. Move the mouse up (away from you) until the top bar of the box aligns with the bottom of the window panes. The line will go purple where the two intersect.

If you cannot see an outlined point ready to click on, select 'Slide' from the 'Options' menu. Click and drag a line, starting away from where you want to move, and the distance you want to go. The line isn't permanent! If you are really lost at this point, select 'Fullpict' from 'Options', and try running over the above step again.

When you have adjusted that particular corner just keep running through the above two paragraphs until you have a window that you are happy with.

Then select 'Group' from the 'Parts' menu, and mark a temporary box around the window. If you want to use your window on future works, select 'Save' from the 'Parts' menu, and enter a name for it. It will then be saved on to the *IntroCAD* disk.

Part 2: Cheat like crazy!

Right, now for the easy bit. Select 'Clone' from the 'Draw' menu, choose the window, and stamp down an even number of copies going off to the right.

You'll probably have to select 'Slide' from 'Options' to move the page so you can then 'Clone' where you want. Select 'Fullpict' from 'Options' after a couple of new windows have appeared, so you can roughly line up further ones using the grid.

After that, do the bottom row of windows. There's absolutely nothing to stop you doing a multistory mansion if that's what you want.

Do remember to leave a space in the middle for a door! By now, you should have a good idea of what to do next. So draw a 'Box' for the outline of a house, and another one for the door.

Part 3: finishing off

I'll leave doing the door to your own artistic temperament. Instead learn about one of the most powerful features of *IntroCAD*.

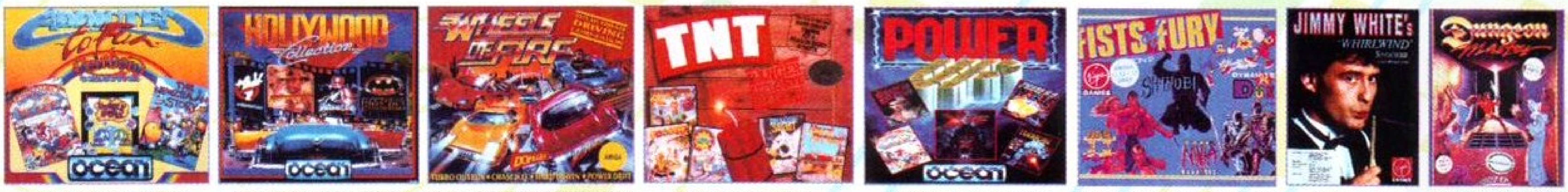
Draw a box on top of the house – this will serve as the roof, but the edges don't slant! Select 'Point' from the 'Edit' menu. Choose the box you have just drawn, and then move the points on the top corners so that the roof slants inwards. I'll leave the smoke and chimney for you to work out (a hint for the smoke – draw a few circles and distort them into elipses. You now have a set of smoke rings).

Before you attempt to print or plot your drawing, select it as a 'Group' and then 'Size' it so that it fits on the set of rulers on the screen. Remember, the rulers are measured in inches (2.5cm to the metric).

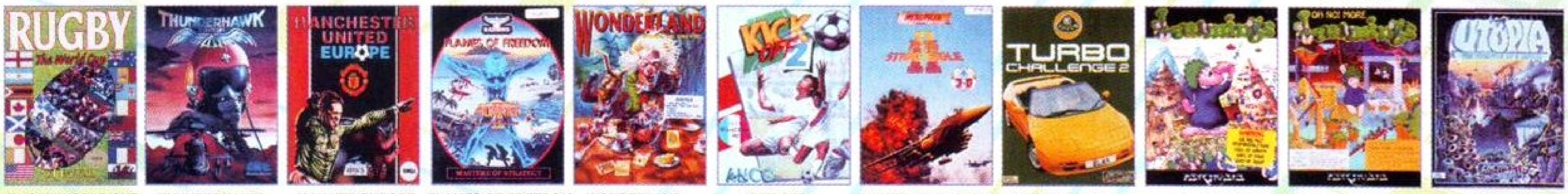
Before you run away to try and draw lots of different objects, a word of advice. Don't attempt things with lots of curves, unless they're circular. And don't try anything too complicated like a face or a plant – organic things are harder to draw.

Enjoy discovering the rest!

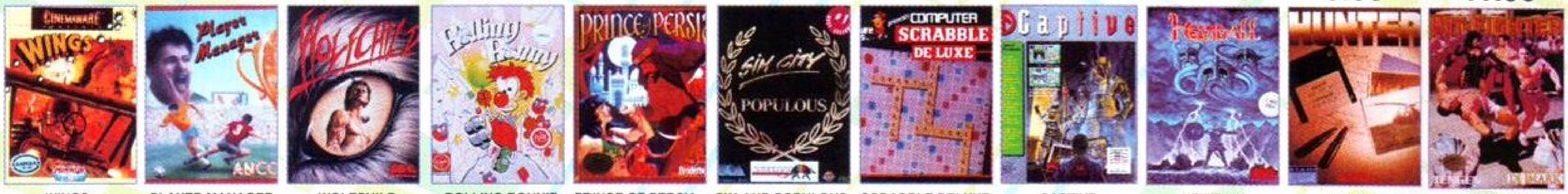

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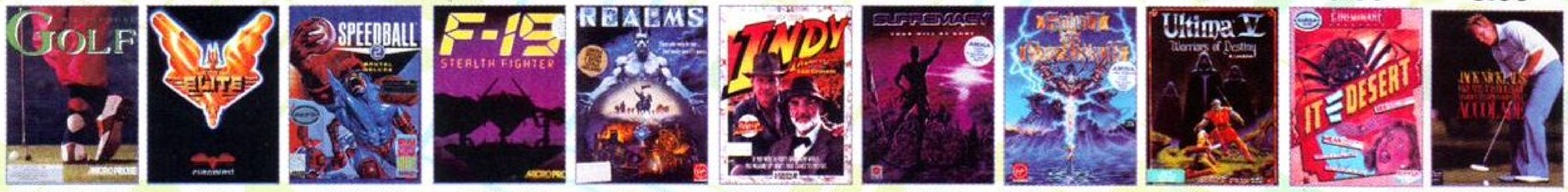
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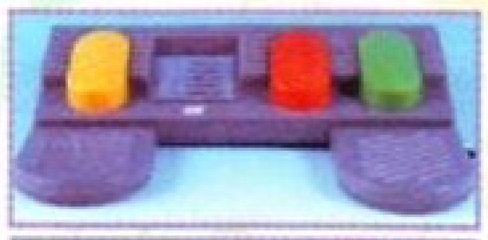

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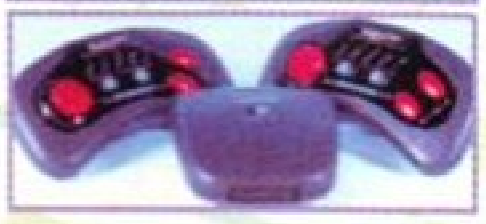

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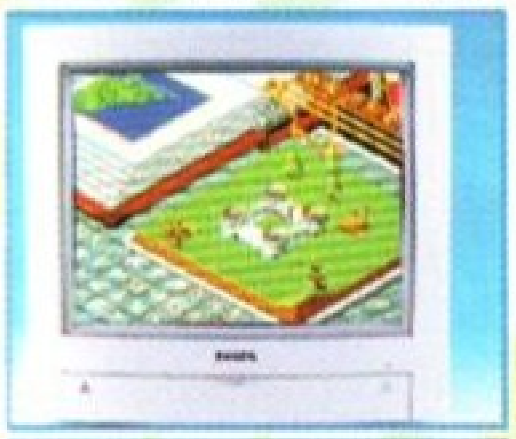
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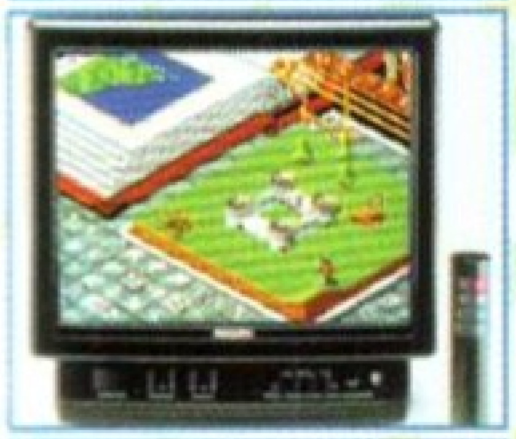
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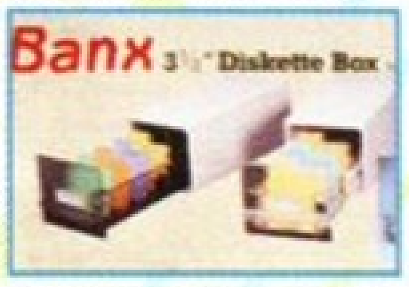


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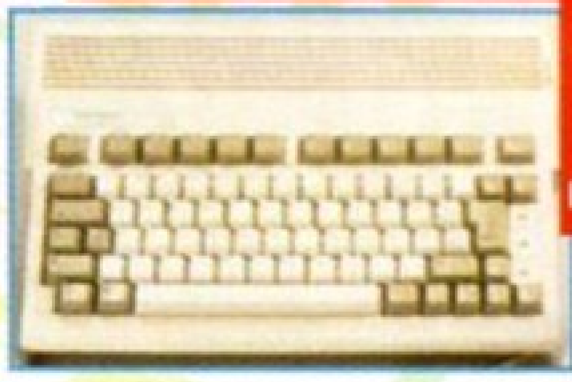
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NEWS ROUND

Hot on the trail of all the new Amiga releases…

EASY DTP UPGRADE

Summer's always a quiet time for new software releases, but there's at least two biggies just out from Stateside DTP experts Gold Disk. Development work that was put on the back burner while all hands worked on their DTP heavyweight *Professional Page 3* has now been completed, resulting in a new version of their structured drawing program, *Professional Draw 3*, and a vastly-improved update of their entry-level DTP system in the form of *PageSetter 3*.

Details of the new *PageSetter* are still a little vague, but we hear that it will include a complete paint package as well as the word processing and layout features of the DTP system, which should once again make it the obvious choice for anyone starting to explore DTP.

UPDATE FOR ARTISTS

By contrast, Gold Disk have released full details of *Professional Draw 3*, which makes full use of the 'Automated Genies' macro system introduced in *Pro Page 3*. It now also lets you type text straight onto the page and has greatly improved colour-handling features.

Both programs are available from distributors HB Marketing (0753 686000) and Silica (081-309 1111), while the new distributor Meridian (081-543 3500) are offering 10 free Type One scalable fonts when you purchase either package, or Soft Logik's superb *PageStream 3*.

HIGH-END CAD

Life has been kicked into the dead CAD market this month with the arrival of the two new versions of *X-CAD*. This powerful 3D design and modelling package comes in a home user's version, *X-CAD 2000*, and a professional version called X-CAD 3000. Meridian (081-543 3500) are offering upgrades to owners of the earlier *X-CAD Designer* and *X-CAD 3D* at the reduced prices of £99.95 for X-CAD 2000 and £299 for *X-CAD 3000*.

BIG MAC AND CHIPS

The excellent A-MAX II Plus Macintosh emulator (reviewed this issue, Page 128) is also available from Meridian (081-543 3500) at £499 including those vital Mac ROM chips: although the official distributor are Entertainment International (0268 541126).

EMULATION SENSATION

Another remarkable emulator is on the way in the form of Emplant, a hardware

Continued overleaf

After months of waiting, the add-on that can turn your A500 into a CDTV is here

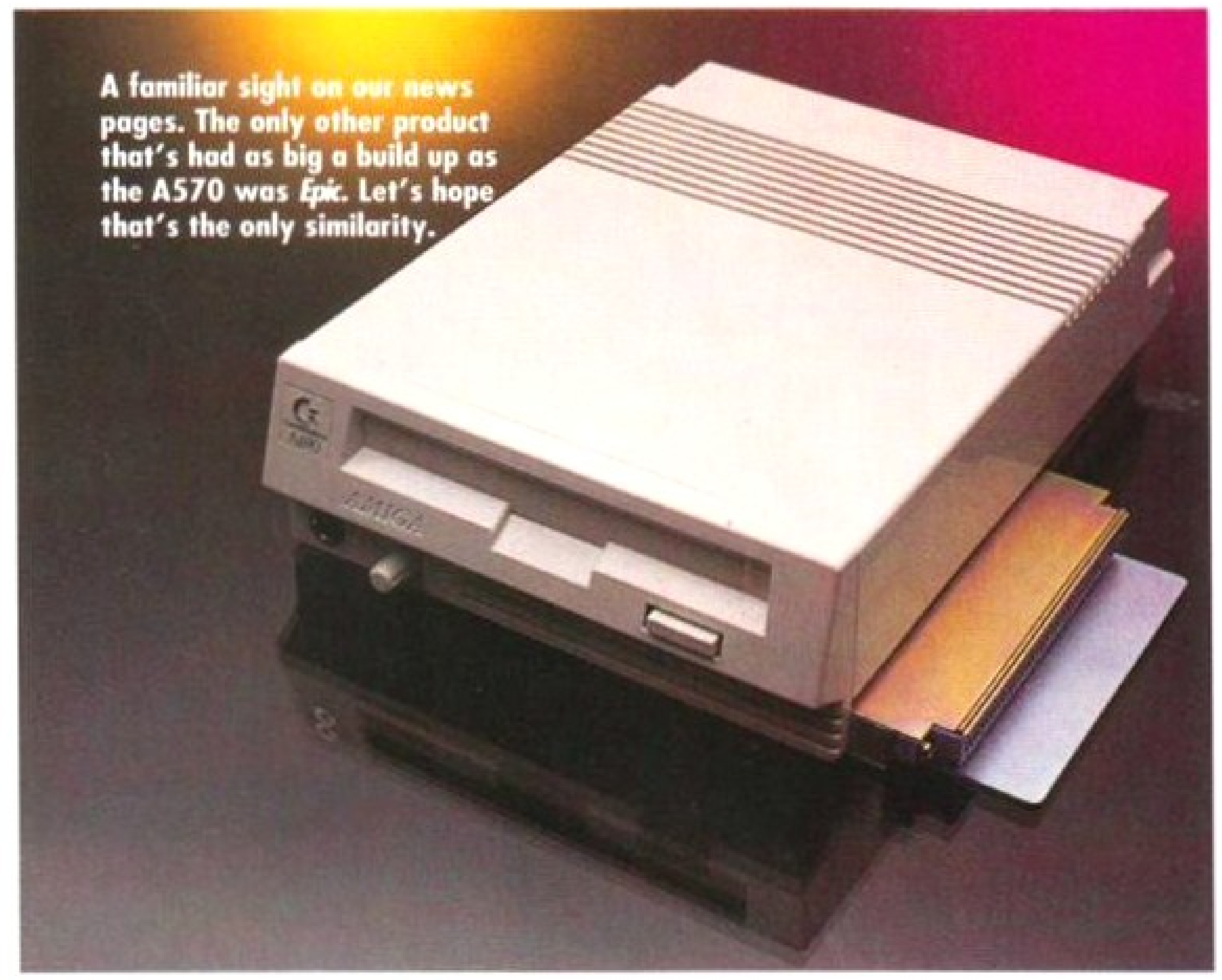
A570 CD-ROM drive goes on sale at £349

The A570 CD-ROM drive goes on sale this month around the country for £349. Production stocks of the so-called 'CDTV interface' are now residing in Commodore's warehouse, all set to shift.

Asked how many Commodore expect to sell, Commodore UK MD Kelly Sumner said, "You could say anything from 10,000 to 50,000 in the first six months, up to Christmas. I would say that we would confidently expect to sell in the 20,000 to 30,000 region.

"It isn't just a CD machine, it's an expansion for hard disk and memory too. This is really designed for the 1.3 owners and there's something like 500-600,000 of them, so if only 10 per cent upgrade that's 60,000. It's not the product for 1.2 owners. It's 1.3 minimum and 1Mb of fast RAM. So the 1.2 owner is best to trade in for the CDTV."

The CDTV trade-in announced last month means that A500 owners can get £200 off £599 'Home Multimedia Pack' – a CDTV with keyboard and disk drive. As for when the A670 CD-ROM drive for the Amiga 600 will appear, Kelly Sumner says, "I would be disappointed if we didn't see it pre-Christmas. The hard work is done: all we have to do now is change the edge connector for a PC bus connector."



A familiar sight on our news pages. The only other product that's had as big a build up as the A570 was *Epic*. Let's hope that's the only similarity.



Commodore's new boss opens up

Kelly Sumner, new MD of Commodore UK, has begun a new regime by talking frankly about new developments for the Amiga. In a full interview on Pages 30-31 of this issue, he reveals why Commodore are so committed to the idea of the CD Amiga, what plans there are for a cut in the price of the Amiga 600 and what the next new Amiga release will be. Turn the pages now to read all about it in our exclusive interview.

The World of Commodore show is replaced this November by an exciting new computer leisure show with much more on offer for Amiga owners…

Amiga Format backs big new show

Last year ***Amiga Format*** sponsored and organised the World of Commodore Show, the biggest show Amiga owners have ever enjoyed in this country. This year, we are linking up with our sister magazines from Future Publishing to present an even bigger and better event.

The Future Entertainment Show takes place at Earls Court in London from Thursday November 5 to Sunday November 8. Major exhibitors will include Commodore themselves, software houses such as Gremlin, EA and Psygnosis and the most significant makers of Amiga hardware and software from around the world.



Last year's World of Commodore Show: this year, FES!

The Future Entertainment Show

There will also be lots of special events going on at the Show, which is expected to be the biggest computer show for five years. Gameplayers will take part in the finals of a massive competition with a £10,000 first prize, with regional heats across the country in October leading up to the big day. Details of how to enter follow next month. The Show will also be televised in the new computer-games programme from Yorkshire TV that starts this autumn.

While it will retain a strong Amiga core, the Future Entertainment Show will cover all formats of computer and games console, so it should be an event for all the family. We'll bring you more details of the Amiga companies who will be attending in our next issue.

As games start to be taken seriously, game producers are using money-raising techniques previously only seen in the movies. Clare Hodgson investigates…

Product placement: the ad cash rolls in

As the curtain falls on the latest blockbuster movie and the hero walks into the sunset, chances are in the background there's a huge neon sign advertising Coca-Cola. Don't imagine for one minute that this is just realistic scenery, or mere coincidence: it's called product placement, it's a form of advertising that brings in absolutely millions of dollars for the movie companies, and it is supported by companies specifically employed to sell 'space' in the films we watch.



Left: *Robocod*, the game that set the agenda for products in games with its Penguin bars.



Right: *Push-Over*, as seen on TV and featuring Curly Colin of Quavers fame in a £2m deal.

An example: in *Terminator*, our hero Kyle Rees steals a pair of trainers from a store. For minutes afterwards, we keep getting shots of his feet as he creeps around, and clearly visible full-on, centre screen, is the Nike logo on the stolen trainers.

Product placement is now creeping into video games. It first cropped up in Millennium's *James Pond 2: Robocod*, where Penguin bars formed a part of the scenery. McVities, makers of Penguin, are keen to be identified with the computer-games scene and now sponsor the official ELSPA charts.

The latest game-to-product tie-in is a complicated affair. Ocean's puzzle game *Push-Over* (see Page 84) features Quavers cartoon character Colin Curly in its intro sequence. Commodore are also involved in this cross-promotion, which involves the game and the Amiga 600 featuring in Smiths Crisps' latest TV ads for Quavers, and a competition to win an A600 on Quavers packets.

Janet Allen-Rodgers, for Smiths Crisps, explains "our research showed that kids' number one interest is computers and playing games." Further investigation revealed that the most popular computer among schoolchildren was the Amiga: hence the tie-in. Smiths are taking advantage of what they call 'pester power': if kids know they want something, their parents are probably going to give in and buy it for them. Who paid who for what is a little vague, but £2 million in total has changed hands in the three-way promotion deal.

As game-players are increasingly being targeted by mainstream advertisers, one thing is for certain: we're going to see a lot more of this kind of tie-in. Don't be surprised if you find that Level 40 of Lemmings 2 is composed entirely of Tunnock's Caramel Wafers…

M-PEG makes CD video a reality

At long last, the Motion Picture Expert Group has set the standard for full-motion video (FMV). This not only opens the way for full-screen video in CDTV titles, but also means we will be able to buy videos on compact disc in the near future.

It's probably the most important thing to happen to the electronics industry since the arrival of Compact Discs. MPEG is a joint 'expert group' of electronics scientists set up and funded by the electronics industry to establish a viable standard for digital video. The fruit of their labours is a standard chip set for compressing and then decompressing digital video data, so that it can be loaded sufficiently quickly from compact disc.

This chip set is now available to all manufacturers to include in their designs. Philips have already announced that they will be providing an MPEG chip add-on for their CDI multimedia system, and that it will be able to play digital videos. Commodore are expected to announce that CDTV will also gain MPEG power very soon.

News Flash: ASDG seek AdPro developers

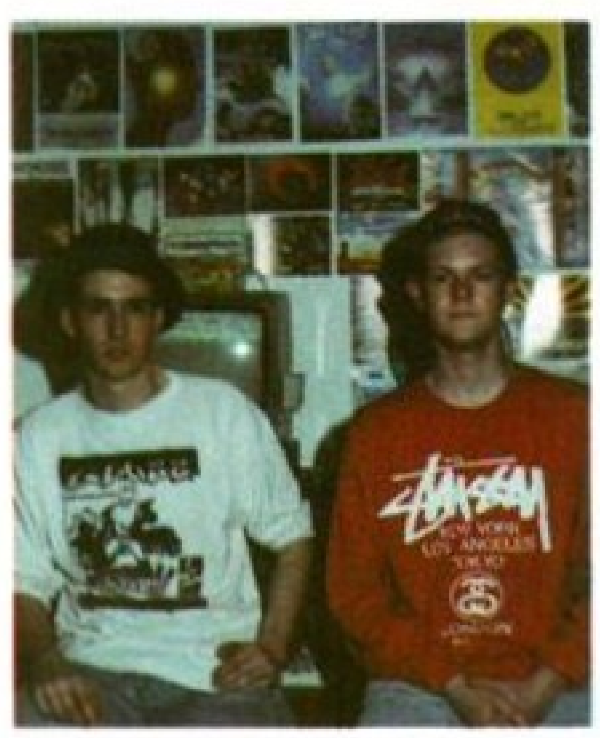
The American publishers of the *Art Department Professional* image processing software are offering Amiga programmers a development kit at a price of $200 which will enable them to make full use of the *AdPro* libraries and use the *AdPro* loader/operator system. If you're a developer who is interested, contact ASDG on 0101 608 273 6585.

News Flash: Amiga design courses from the experts

The London College of Printing is one of the top places in the country to learn about design, and over the summer they are offering courses to learn about all aspects of computer graphics, working on Amiga systems. The courses run on various dates from August 17th to September 18th, cost between £165 and £295 and cover subjects including interactive multimedia, image processing and presentation graphics. If you're interested, get in touch immediately with the Short Courses Secretary on 071 793 0077.

So you wanna be a rock-and-roll star?

It's not often we get record labels asking us to request readers' demo tapes, but Delirious Records make their own music on the Amiga and are looking for other emerging talent to sign to their new label. Their latest EP 'Thrill Seekers – The Blitz' was produced on a 1Mb A500 using *ProTracker*. The sort of stuff they are looking for is the ubiquitous hardcore dance: if you've got something you think is good enough to make the playlists then send it to the A&R Department, Delirious Records, 8 Harvey Road, Dunstable, BEDS LU6 2AL. The boyz promise to listen to every tape sent, but they can't return any…



If you've got a tape, these guys want to hear from you…

system that the manufacturers claim can be adapted to emulate any kind of machine with the addition of the right ROM chips and software. It works on any kind of Amiga, too. The first emulation available is a Mac system, which costs between £165 and £205 depending on what options you wish to include. Mega ST and IBM AT versions are planned to follow. Full details from distributor Blitsoft on 0908 666265.

A600 SHOCKER!

It actually comes as a bit of a shock that Commodore are the first to get out an expansion for the A600, in the form of the A601 1Mb RAM expansion. By next month we're certain there will be a host of rivals for it from the many third party developers, so expect a range of A600 expansions to be reviewed in these pages in October's issue.

FIRE DELAY DISASTER

Bad news, on the other hand, from US hardware supremos Progressive Peripherals and Software, who make the extraordinary 68040 accelerator card for the A500. It was due to be reviewed in our 'Super A500s' feature this month, but PP&S's HQ was burnt to the ground in a fire that took most of a city block with it. All stock and much development work has been lost.

SUPPORT YOUR ANIMATOR

Amiga animation enthusiasts should take a look at the *Amigator* newsletter produced by American animfan Gerry Paquette. It's full of ideas and explorations of techniques and costs $15 for a year's subscription (six issues) from Amigator, PO Box 26026, Nepean, Ontario, Canada K2H 9RO.

STAR TREKKING

Anyone who has seen the fabulous animations on the theme of Star Trek by Tobias Richter cannot fail to be interested in the video 'Space Wars' that Tobias has just recorded, with music by Norwegian Amiga fan Bjorn A Lynne. If you'd like a copy, rush a cheque for £12 (UK money) payable to Bjorn A Lynne at Schleppergrellsgt. 10, 0556 Oslo, Norway.

CHEAP HELP

National Amiga user group ICPUG is offering part-year subscriptions for the first time, presumably so users can try membership out and see if they like it. The six-month subscription, covering three issues of the group's weighty journal, costs £10 while a four-month sub is £7. Details from ICPUG chairman John Bickerstaff on 081 651 5436.

AMIGA MUSIC ON CD

If you want to find out what you can do with an Amiga 1500, some sequencing software and a keyboard, try the latest CD from Worldbeat Music. It's intended as production music for film and video and is available for £65 with a complete licence, but musician Paul Blyth is offering it to Amiga fans who'd like a listen for £10.50, including P&P. Worldbeat Music, Bridgend House, Lasswade, Edinburgh EH18 1NA.



The plastic in question being your trusty Amiga 500, of course. Because if you take it along to your local stockist



and trade it in, we'll exchange it for a new generation Amiga CDTV multi-media computer pack for only £399.99.* That's £200 less than the normal retail price. And remember, that includes an Amiga CDTV player with keyboard, mouse, floppy disc drive and a 12 month warranty - the whole shooting match. This fantastic offer to our Amiga customers closes at the end of September. So hurry, as they say, while stocks last. And don't forget the plastic.

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Damien Noonan gives his own highly biased views about the state of the Amiga: this month, are computers taking the place of pop music in 'yoof culture'?

Long live rock-n-roll

IT'S A SIGN of the times. Next month, we will announce that *Amiga Format*'s officially audited average circulation has reached around 160,000 copies a month: more or less the same as the best-selling music magazine, *Q*.

The national newspapers and the music press are full of speculation that pop music may be dead, that computer games have taken over as the cult medium of the Nineties. Roll over Prince and Madonna: Mario, Sonic and the Lemmings are here.

Andy Smith, once games editor of *Amiga Format* and now Editor of console magazine *Sega Power*, has been invited to speak to a conference of music-industry bigwigs later this year. The subject? Have computer games taken over from pop music as the main youth culture of the decade?

An article by Barry Hugill in the Observer of July 19 assesses the scale of the crisis. As Channel 4's *Gamesmaster* TV series plans an autumn return, *Top of the Pops* faces the axe. And the Top 40 chart is to go.

"Radio One confirmed it is to compile a chart based on what listeners request," reports the *Observer*. "In the Sixties and Seventies the charts mattered. Discs had to sell a quarter of a million to stand any chance of a place, but today a mere 10,000 sale can guarantee a top spot." Whereas a hit computer game can sell 20 to 50,000 copies on the Amiga alone. "Young people are more into computer games and television than listening to records," suggests David Gedge, singer with the Wedding Present.

Walk into one of the big retail stores in the high street, and you'll see the physical evidence. Record sections are shrinking while computer games and software sections are getting ever-more prominent.

So pop music is dead. People are more interested in watching the telly and playing computer games. Is this good news for us, or not?

We've been promised that when computer games start to sell in major quantities, when they are seen as a major leisure occupation, that prices will fall as sales rise. It's a free market.

What worries me is that they won't. Games are selling in quantities large enough for the software companies to make fat, healthy, bouncing profits. The games consoles are keeping sales high, and the cartridge is cutting the piracy drain. But we're still paying, and the excuse now is piracy.

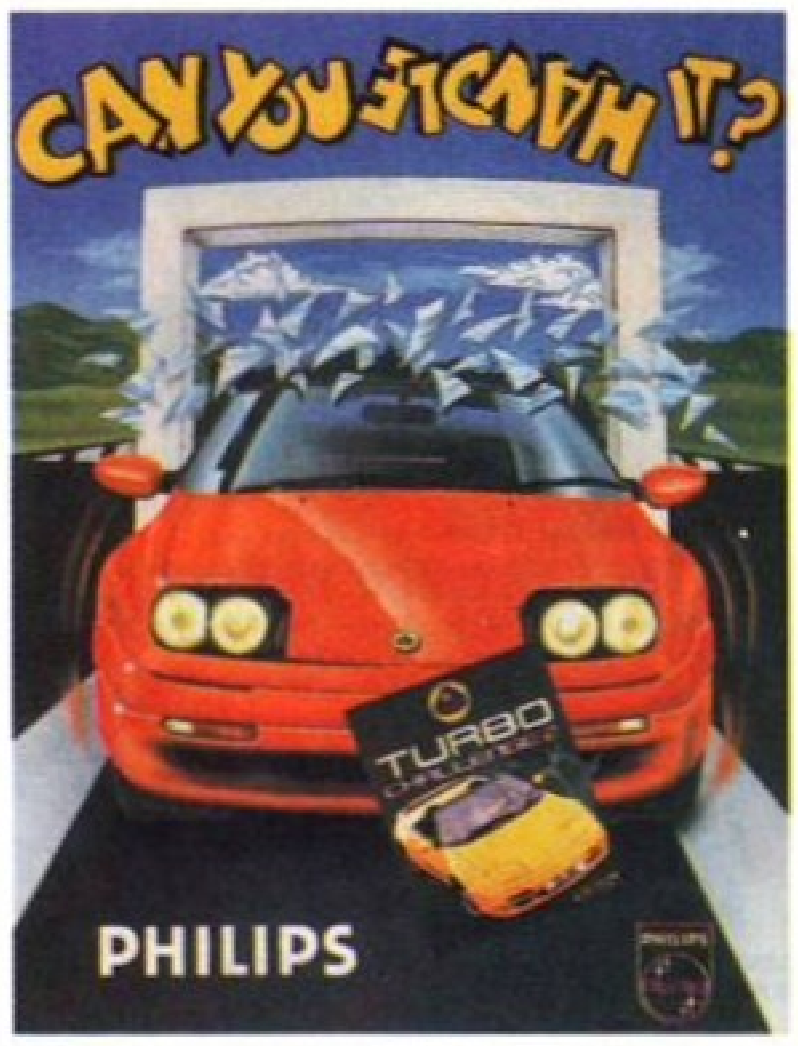
Yet there's one sign of hope: the attitude of Commodore to CD. They could just be right this time...

Philips continue to push best-selling games monitor with offer for Amiga owners

Free Lotus with monitor

The Philips CM8833/II is the best-selling monitor for the Amiga, so it tends to be first and most obvious choice anyway when people are looking at buying a monitor. Last year, though, Philips discovered the benefits of a closer and more specific tie-in with Amiga game-players when they gave away a copy of the MicroProse flight simulator F-19 Stealth Fighter with every monitor purchased.

This year they are repeating the offer. Starting in September, special packs (identified by an enormous blue sticker on the box) will contain a free copy of the Gremlin game Lotus Turbo Challenge 2. It seems sure to be a successful choice, because it's a more accessible and easily enjoyable type of game than the more techie flight sim. And it's a darned good game, too.



A free *Lotus* game with Philips monitors.

Buyers of the monitor will also be able to enter a competition, in which they could win a VIP visit to next year's British Grand Prix, arriving in style by helicopter. Runner-up prizes of radio-controlled Ferraris are also on offer.

The promotion works in Philips' favour not only because it attracts Amiga gamers to their monitor but also because it ensures that people buy the official UK monitor pack. So-called 'grey imports' - stock intended for sale in another country, re-imported to the UK and sold at a lower price - do not include the free game and Philips will not provide technical support for grey-import models.

The recommended retail price of the CM8833/II is £229, but it is more common to see it on sale for £189-£199.

Citizen release new 24-pin dot matrix range that they think will be best-seller

Printer aims for top spot

Citizen have launched a new range of Swift 24-pin printers with the avowed intent of making it the top-selling machine of its type, rather than the third place the manufacturer currently holds. "We believe this range includes all the features offered by every one of our competitors, and more" said a Citizen spokesman at the launch.

The new Swift range consists of three machines: the basic 200, the 240 with more fonts and the 240C which comes as standard with colour included. All the models are robust and compact and have been designed for minimum noise. They all have two extras: an 'auto-set' mode that switches to emulations according to the data sent by the computer, and a 'quarter printing' facility that produces reduced, tiled pages suitable for use in a personal organiser.



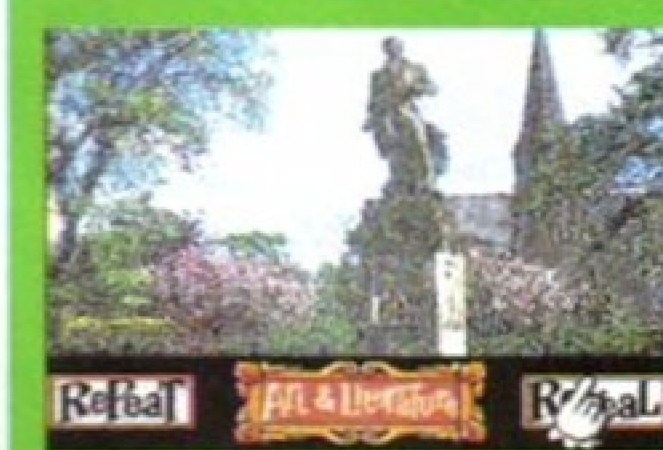
The new Citizen range of Swift 24-pin dot matrix printers majors on quiet speed.

Citizen have also introduced a new kind of clear film, suitable for printing in a dot-matrix machine to produce OHP transparencies, which could be widely used in presentations as well as for fun.

Features on the new Swift range are, as ever, too numerous to list in this space but we will be taking a closer look at the machines in next month's printer buyer's guide.

Citizen Europe Ltd 0753 584111

CDTV titles update

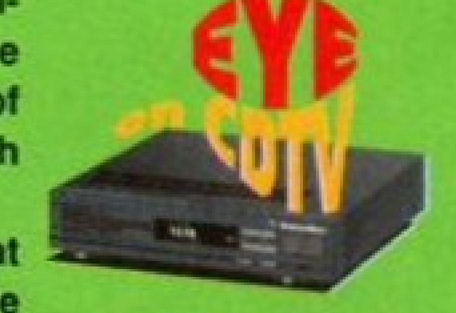


Domark's *Triv Pursuit*: two discs of the most important CDTV title yet.

"Where Philips got it right and Commodore went wrong," one CD pundit suggested to ***Amiga Format*** the other day, "was pouring money into the early titles." We hear that Philips have 100 per cent funded early CDI projects and spent masses more money than has the average CDTV developer, to ensure high quality. Public reaction has shown that the investment in quality has paid off.

The 'first generation' of CDTV titles, on the other hand, has generally been disappointing. Less money has been spent on development and the 'last 10 per cent' of quality has been missing. However, some of the 'second generation' titles, of which much more is expected, are on the way soon.

CDTV ***Trivial Pursuit***, put together by games developers Domark, could be one of the most important. The game that started the triv quiz craze is jazzed up by the addition of animation and graphics, but remains essentially the same otherwise. It's the sort of big name association from which CDTV will benefit greatly.



Many people don't realise that Commodore US, under the name CDTV Publishing, publish the vast majority of CDTV titles. This means they get to check them all before release, so if the quality isn't up to scratch then Commodore are very much to blame.

Currently awaiting the Commodore stamp of approval is Virgin's ***North Polar Expedition***, an interactive record of Sir Ranulph Fiennes' trip to the pole of a couple of years ago. It's widely said to be the most impressive multimedia experience yet to emerge, so we look forward to seeing it soon. Also being given the once-over is ***Musicolor***, Virgin's innovative music teaching disc.

One thing CDI can't compete with CDTV on is simple arcade games, and there's two new ones out this month. Empire have CDTVed their action tank sim ***Team Yankee*** as a straight port of the Amiga version, while the first CDTV title ever to be developed in Holland is a collection of three gambling game sims under the title ***Casino Games***, offering poker, one-armed bandits and roulette.

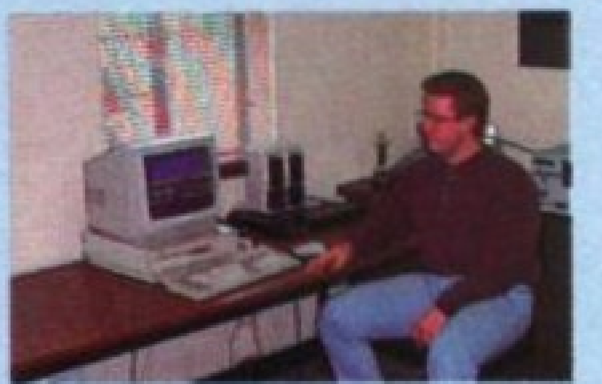
Get your head round this!







VIRTUAL REALITY UPDATE



Incentive's Paul Gregory ponders over the new changes to *3DCK2*.



Check out the coverdisk, where you'll find a playable demo.

Incentive will soon be releasing *3D Construction Kit 2* through Domark. Originally titled *Creation*, that monicker has been dropped to avoid causing confusion over what the product is.

3D Construction Kit 2 is a game-design system. It helps you to create 3D adventures, that were pioneered by Incentive some years ago under the title Freescape. Freescape lets you wander around a landscape, changing your view as you go to create a real world to explore, rather than the more standard 'flat' views of arcade games.

Additions to the original *Kit* are mostly geared towards hiding the fact that games were written with an editor, rather than using machine code. So now you can use your own fonts within a game, your own soundtrack, and change the mouse pointer and border which surrounds the 3D view.

Other new features are; a built-in sound editor, to tweak samples to their prime; transparent and translucent objects, which can fade at the blast of a laser; a video-recorder mode, to include little animated strips within a game; print any screen or save it to an IFF file; and new object shapes including spheres and 'flexicubes'. The latter start life as ordinary cubes, but can be squashed and distorted into different shapes, so removing some of the original's 'square and blocky' look.

A much-improved scripting language has also been included to help with the game logic and control. As a bonus, hundreds of predesigned objects have been included to help get you started on your own games. *3D Construction Kit 2* will sell for £49.95, and has been scheduled før release in mid September.
Domark 081-780-2222.

POOL - IS IT WORTH MAKING A DIVE FOR?



Okay, so it looks like Jimmy White's Whirlwind Snooker, but it plays like Pool.

Archer MacLean is back in programming mode once again, having enjoyed a long rest after his mammoth two-year stretch working on *Jimmy White's Whirlwind Snooker*. He's been taking a fresh look at the *JWWS* program code and is busily changing and tweaking it for his latest game, *Pool*.

Pool is the next release coming from Virgin Games, and it's due in September (if Archer has finished it in time). It features the full eight and nine ball rules, (just like the Americans use) plus the normal pub-game rules which we're probably a bit more familiar with.

Archer's also been toying with a few more crazy-ball effects, for those moments when you're spending too much time planning your shots. He's currently dreaming them in his sleep and programming them in when he wakes up! He's also created 20 different computer players, each with a different skill and playing style, so that even the toughest and wimpiest players can play against someone of similar stature. For groups of players, there's a new tournament mode where everyone can compete together.

Due to be finished at the end of August, *Pool* should be on the shelves during the later part of September. We'll bring you the full review in next month's ***Amiga Format***.

Games News

What's going down in the Amiga games-world while you're playing around with the latest offerings? We take a quick peek into the future, as Neil Jackson does a knock-and-run on all the software house doors...



Delphine's *Flashback*; another hit for US Gold?



If Mansell doesn't win, it'll be due to gremlins.

US Gold

They're getting ready for the big push on Delphine's new *Flashback*. This sexy-looking follow-up to *Another World* is due out in November. Meanwhile the Goldies are tying up the loose ends on their *Mega Sports* compilation (£25.99) which features some of the best games from the old Epyx range.



Is bandwagon-jumping a new Olympic event?

Ocean

Like those chaps at US Gold, the chaps at Ocean are currently tinkering with *their* Olympic-sized sports tie-in, *Espana: The Games* (£25.99). It features a wealth of Olympic-related stuff, like training, doctors, medals and presumably drug-screening too. As we go to press we've just received our review copy, so we'll bring you the complete review in next month's ***Amiga Format***.

Gremlin

These guys are real busy beavers, with a whole host of stuff in the pipeline. The first thing we'll see is the add-on disk for *Utopia*, called *The New Worlds* (£14.99). In late September, it'll be time for *Lotus 3 - The Final Challenge* (£25.99), touted as the definitive racing game. It's got a special track editor system which works with code-words, so you'll never need another race-game again (or so Gremlin say). *Zool* (£25.99) is currently being held over until October, because Gremlin don't reckon it will sell too well during the summer months – they think everyone will be out playing frisbee, rather than playing on their Amigas!

In November there are three Gremlin games planned:*Nigel Mansell's World Championship Challenge* (£25.99) which, not surprisingly, is another racing game (Hang on! I thought they said...) featuring potential champeeeen of the world, our Nige. Next is *Hero Quest 2* (£25.99) and, last but not least, *Daemonsgate* (£34.99) their new role-player.

Electronic Arts

They're putting the pressure on those poor Bullfrog chaps, to get them to finish the add-on we've all been waiting for: *Populous II: The Challenge Games* (£14.99) . Due very soon, it features *Populous II* scenarios set in ancient Japan, as races-against-the-clock.

Budget News

Here's the latest news on what's lined up for release this September in the Cheap 'n' Cheerful department. We'll bring you full reviews as soon as we've managed to save up the dosh to go down the market and buy them.

Action 16 Supreme (Digital Integration)
Spectrum Holobyte's *Falcon* (£14.99)
Falcon Mission Disks: Operation Counterstrike
Operation Firefight (£9.99)

Action 16 Premier (Digital Integration)
Operation Combat (£9.99)
Alternative Software
Sooty & Sweep (£7.99)
Popeye to the Rescue (£7.99)

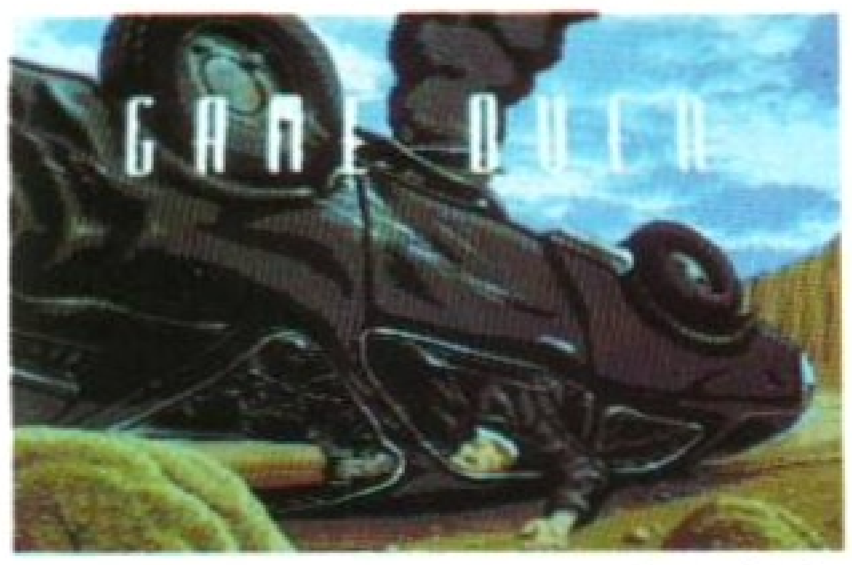
Kixx (US Gold)
Panza Kick Boxing (£7.99)

Codemasters
Captain Dynamo (£7.99)
Grell & Fella (£7.99)
DJ Puff's Volcanic Caper (£TBA)
Seymour's Wild West (£TBA)
Soccer Pinball (£7.99)

GBH Gold (Gremlin)
Shoot-em-up Construction Kit (£9.99)

GBH (Gremlin)
Krisalis' Boxing Manager (£7.99)
Jahangir Khan's World Championship Squash (£7.99)

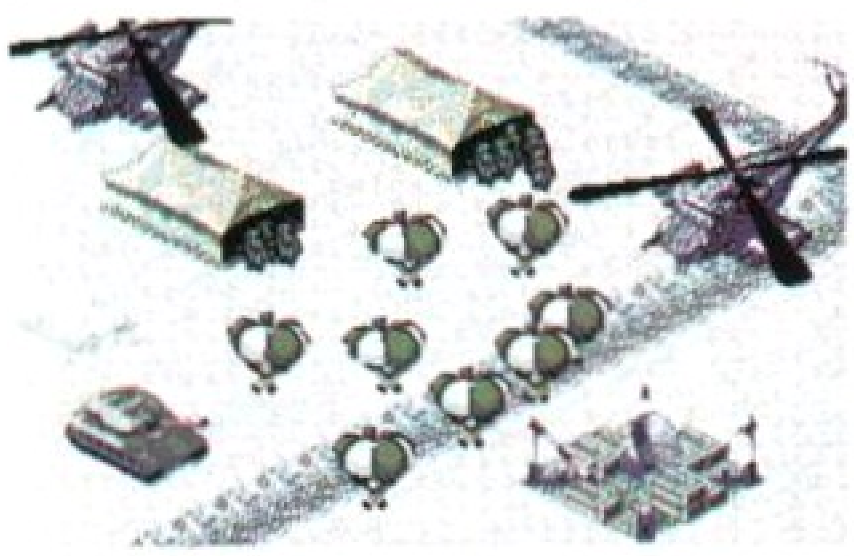
Team 17
Alien Breed Re-mix (£TBA)



That's no way to park a car, even in the outlands.

Mindscape

Hidden away at Mindscape, you'll find three exciting-looking titles getting their final tweaks and polishes. *BattleToads*, a kind of *Turtles*-inspired beat-em-up (with loadsa-merchandising tie-ins to come) is due in September or October, while (most promisingly) we may see *Wing Commander* – the mega space adventure which wowed PC-owners a while ago – coming to Amiga screens in October. Best of the bunch looks to be *Outlander*, a crazy *Mad Max*-style road racing game - with plenty of car-crunching action.



What Geneva Convention? *Rookies* don't care.

Virgin

Two hot-looking titles soon to reach us from the Branson empire are *Rookies*: a crazy action war-game where you make the rules and (slightly behind the times) a Soviet-inspired game of intrigue, *KGB*. Both of these games should be with us for the October issue.



It's blue, blobby and gets stuck up kid's noses.

System 3

Remember Silly Putty, the stuff you could bend, snap and peel off news-print with? Well, System 3 have brought this gook to life in their latest project of the same name. Due in September, they reckon their arcade-style platform game will do for the A600 what Sonic the Hedgehog and the Mario Bros did for the console. We'll see...

Vivid Image

Those *First Samurai* lads are just getting ready to start the real work on the sequel, unsurprisingly named *The Second Samurai*. It's due to hit the shelves in time for Christmas, but Vivid Image are still searching for a publisher.



Let's go hangar-busting in the new *Tornado*.

Digital Integration

Still busy with their new flight-sim,*Tornado*, due for release in October. They're also handling the UK distribution of Coktel Vision's *Fascination* (£29.99) and Linel's *The Game of Life* and *Traders* due for the autumn.

Psygnosis

Working on *Beast III: Out of the Shadow* (£25.99) for September, as well as *Armour-Geddon II* (£25.99) and *Cytron* (£25.99) for October and *Tomatoes* (£25.99) in November.

Mirage

They've just picked up the unfinished Electronic Zoo title, *Prophecy* (£29.99) and are getting ready to release it any day now. Still no sign of *Humans*, yet, but we're told it's almost ready...



Blimey! Who'd you rather take down the pub?

Loriciel

They've got a saucy looking Christmas title waiting for the finishing touches. Called *Entity*, it features an extremely well-endowed lady in a strange fantasy beat-em-up.



The way to stop trench-foot is to go over the top.

Blue Byte

They're busy drawing up their *History Line 1914-18*, a reworking of the Format Gold-rated *Battle Isles* game in WW1 fashion. Due out in September, *History Line 1914-18* features the kind of ammunition and armaments which made the Somme such a horrible place to be. We'll bring you the low-down on the game just as soon as the artillery's stopped.

Top 30 Amiga Full Price Games Chart

ELSPA PENGUIN CHARTS COMPILED BY GALLUP

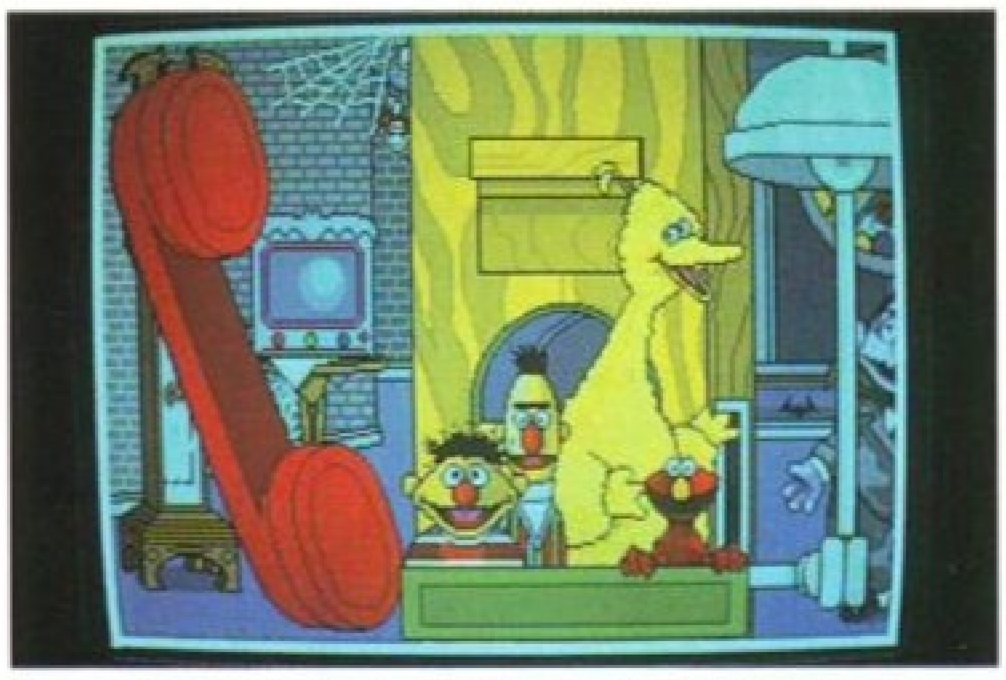
Pos	Move	Title / Publisher	Score
1(3)	▲	**Sensible Soccer** Renegade/Mindscape/Sensible Software	FG91%
2(2)	■	**Monkey Island 2** US Gold/Lucasfilm	FG95%
3(3)	■	**Striker** Rage Software	FG93%
4(-)	New	**Lure of the Temptress** Virgin/Revolution	FG92%
5(16)	▲	**Fire and Ice** Renegade/Mindscape	89%
6(9)	▲	**Formula One Grand Prix** MicroProse	FG92%
7(1)	▼	**Epic** Ocean	34%
8(15)	▲	**Championship Manager** Domark	41%
9(29)	▲	**Graham Taylor's Soccer Challenge** Krisalis	82%
10(18)	▲	**The Addams Family** Ocean	78%
11(4)	▼	**Jaguar XJ220** Core Design	79%
12(-)	New	**Dune** Virgin	79%
13(-)	New	**European Football Championship** Domark	Review next issue!
14(-)	New	**Civilization** MicroProse	FG94%
15(7)	▼	**The Manager** US Gold/Software 2000	79%
16(10)	▼	**John Madden American Football** Electronic Arts	FG94%
17(11)	▼	**Eye of the Beholder 2** US Gold/SSI	FG91%
18(-)	New	**Push-Over** Ocean	86%
19(19)	■	**PGA Tour+** Electronic Arts	Compilation
20(13)	▼	**Jimmy White's Whirlwind Snooker** Virgin	FG91%
21(8)	▼	**Project X** Team 17	75%
22(-)	New	**Myth** System 3	58%
23(-)	Re-entry	**Alien Breed** Team 17	74%
24(-)	New	**World Series Cricket** Soundware International	61%
25(-)	New	**Hook** Ocean	58%
26(30)	▲	**James Pond 2: Robocod** Millennium	FG91%
27(25)	▼	**Birds of Prey** Electronic Arts	88%
28(-)	New	**Paperboy 2** Mindscape	Review next issue!
29(9)	▼	**Dizzy's Excellent Adventures** Code Masters	Compilation
30(12)	▼	**Space Crusade** Gremlin Graphics	82%

As Philips' CDTV-beating CDI system goes on sale, it seems the biggest fight Philips face is against ignorance, not against Commodore…

Game on for Philips CDI



Philips CDI – no longer in competition, but facing a battle for recognition in its own right.



This is one of the first CDI titles, a kids' adventure playground based around Sesame Street. It's great!

Philips have finally launched CDI, their CDTV competitor, in this country. It's been on sale in the US for over a year now, though Philips say no sales figures are available from which to judge how well it's doing. Philips are similarly reluctant to speculate on how well CDI will do in the UK.

Like CDTV it's a new idea, so buyers have to be shown what it can do before they even know they might want one. Philips are attracting customers to demonstrations of CDI by offering them entry to a £1,000 competition.

Philips are encouraged by research figures that show 10 per cent of adult males already know what CDI is. Gina Jones of Philips' PR company says that they expect the first CDI buyers to be "classic early adopters, in their thirties with a high disposable income." She points out that 50 per cent of people who have bought CDI didn't ask for a demonstration first.

CDI is a dedicated hardware system based around the same 68000 chip as the Amiga, with software loaded from compact disc – it has better resolution and more colours for the graphic display than CDTV. It costs £599 and buyers get a voucher for £50 worth of software – titles cost between £14.95 and £39.95.

A lot of effort and money has gone into ensuring the first discs for CDI ooze quality. Favourite examples are *Sesame Street*, an explorative educational storybook for kids that's packed with good ideas, and a photography tutor that lets you set up a pretend camera and shows you what sort of results you would get.

Journalists who have compared the two systems come down in favour of CDI. Philips, however, are giving the impression that the two are not in direct competition and that the marketplace is big enough for both. "We don't like to think they are competing because they are not the same system," says Gina Jones for Philips, who can see the way in which CDTV is being 'repositioned' as an Amiga accessory.

Indeed, the major fight is shared by both: to get the idea of home multimedia across to the Great British public. The method most likely to succeed is the 'take control of your telly' angle that both Philips and Commodore's advertising has reflected. The key to this making sense to punters could be the full-motion video standard just announced (see Page 20), which finally makes interactive video a reality.

News Flash: War against piracy gets serious

FAST, the Federation against Software Theft, has just appointed its first full-time expert to help its battle against piracy. An Ipswich pirate has just been sentenced to 180 hours' community service and fined £200 after being found guilty of distributing cracked software on bulletin boards. "Be assured," declare FAST, "stories such as this will appear with increasing regularity as the big guns hit their targets." FAST phone 0628 660377

How it works: CDTV multimedia

Optonica are about to launch what could be the best CDTV title yet to appear. And that's just the start. Damien Noonan went along to see how they do it.

"Our advantage is that we have programmers as well as production people," says Lee Gibson, founder of Optonica. Developing for CD is a meeting of two worlds, the coding skills of programmers and the production skills of video and film makers, but all too often the two mix like oil and water.

Optonica are about to release what could be the best CDTV disc to date. *Insight: Technology* has been seven man-years in production and is the first in a planned series of 'how it works' illustrated books. "We've tried to remember that people will want to read it the same way they would a book," says Lee, explaining their approach.

What sets *Insight: Technology* apart is the use of graphics. Three artists at Optonica slaved over Deluxe Paint to produce high-quality illustrations. Each of the 200-plus 'topics' on the disc has photographic as well as Amiga-generated pictures and some also have CDXL video clips. All are accompanied by a narrative explanation as well as text.

Quality of the results can be put down to a vast amount of experience - Optonica have been working in multimedia presentations for years and produced the first CDTV demo for Commodore's launch two years ago - but also to a lot of thought about how multimedia should work. But perhaps of even more significance is the solid programming background.

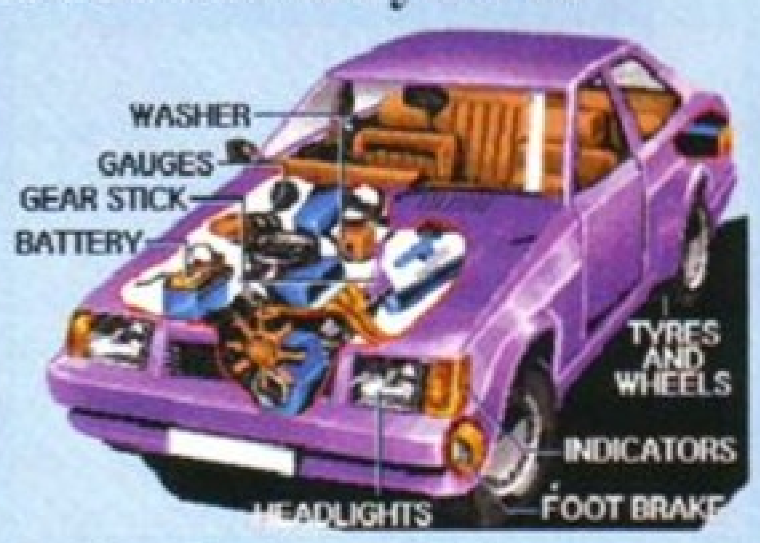


Amigas run Optonica's authoring system.

Optonica's groundwork has been thorough. They have developed a complete suite of libraries that has allowed them to develop a collection of programming tools customised to suit the needs of CDTV developers. And the good news is that they are to make them commercially available.

"Eventually we hope to make it a multi-platform development system, to cover CDI and PC CD-ROM too," says Lee. "But for now we're consolidating what we've got and we're keeping an eye on the other systems."

Probably the most exciting tools is Videostream. This is a new automated way of producing CDXL quarter-screen video sequences. In fact, the end result is Optonica's own version of CDXL called VAXL.



Insight: Technology on CDTV in action.

Videostream controls a professional video deck. It lets you construct sequences of video frames as a rough, editing as you go along. The Amiga can then be left to grab the sequence frame by frame, interleaving samples of audio so that the soundtrack never goes out of sync. It's a clever, polished and simple system that would be invaluable to a CDTV producer and it is due to go on sale soon.

Optonica are also still selling their Simpatica system, which is in some ways the mirror image of Videostream. It also controls a SMPTE video deck, which lets you batch record animations and Amiga-produced graphics frame by frame straight on to videotape. It's not cheap at £1,000, but the quality is unrivalled.

Videostream is to be followed by Interplay, which is essentially a suite of programs containing all the applications a team would need to produce a multimedia presentation on the Amiga. "It replaces lots of little learning curves with one slightly larger one," says Lee, pointing out that all the programs share a common interface.

Programs include a supremely good file manager system that lets you display or execute any kind of file – animations, pictures, sound samples, runnable programs – as well as doing lots more besides. There's a multimedia database which is ideal for storing the masses of information that a multimedia production requires.

"We've tried to include everything you would need while leaving out all the frills that no-one will touch," Lee points out, "and we use the programs ourselves. Our production people aren't told what they can and can't use, but they choose to use our own." Interplay will cost around £2,000 but it really is the all-in-one answer: we'll take a closer look at it soon.

There's more on the way from Optonica, too: we're particularly looking forward to their Pandora's Box CDTV demo, which will cost only a fiver yet as well as examples of their multimedia productions and a sample of their *Insight: Technology* title also contains hundreds of examples of clip-art. Businesses can get it free if they just send a business card. Full details follow next month.

Optonica 0455 558282



The man who made the Amiga, and the man who will make it even greater. Steve Franklin (front) is off to a new role in CDTV, so Kelly Sumner (back) takes over at Commodore UK.

Straight from the horse's

Kelly Sumner is the brand-new boss of Commodore UK, the company behind the Amiga. **Damien Noonan** went to Commodore HQ and found a new atmosphere of open discussion, which means he came back with some important issues and some exciting news...

WHEN THE CHANNEL 4 television programme *GamesMaster* starts its new series this autumn, you'll see Kelly Sumner playing a game and probably not doing very well at it. He confesses it's not his greatest strength, "but I think it's important for kids to see that a young guy like me is where he is."

At the tender age of 31, Kelly is the head honcho at Commodore UK. "I joined Commodore on June 11 1979 because they were then offering training as an electronics engineer," reflects Kelly. "I was a bench engineer on a line. Most of our business, though, was calculators, watches and chess games, things like that.

"When the Vic 20 came along, I was sole engineer on that. When the 64 came along, the same. But don't give me one to repair now!"

After four years on the service and repair end, a switch into sales and marketing followed, then a new machine called the Amiga 1000 came along and, by sheer chance, Kelly found a place on the Amiga sales team. "It was tough, very tough. I can't say it was the most successful product ever. Selling for about £1,500 as a single drive and £1,700 with two floppies. But, hey, it was a heck of a machine. We probably sold about 14,000 in a year."

The following year the A500 was launched and Kelly moved up through the new retail division, finally becoming sales manager about a year before he was appointed managing director. "Three years ago I was just a sales person in the company and either I've been very lucky or I've stabbed a lot of people in the back along the way!" he jests.

"Basically I've got where I am through two things: hard work and common sense. I'm certainly not the best educated person academically. In fact, if truth be told, I've only got CSEs."

Is it significant that the new boss comes from the leisure side of the company, the side where the Amiga dominates? "Commodore have always been in mass-merchant consumer electronics. We will never, ever be an IBM. What we're very good at is producing cost-effective kit and selling it in large volumes, and that basically means consumer products. The core of the company is retail."

But what of the Amiga? It's been a time of change lately, with the demise of the A500 and the introduction of its controversial replacement, the A600, but how does Kelly feel the Amiga 'got where it is today?'

"As my predecessor would say, it had the 'Wow!' factor. Graphically and soundwise it was years ahead of its time. Then the quality and depth of support, whether it be software or hardware, made it a hit with the techno people, and then they started saying

WHY CD IS SO IMPORTANT TO COMMODORE

The big issue of the moment is piracy. The software houses who make the games lose a lot of money to piracy, so they want to move out of disk-based software. It's been suggested that this move could kill the Amiga. How are Commodore reacting? Is the future in cartridges for the PC bus?

"If these guys don't make money, they aren't going to produce software, so our Amiga base isn't going to have all these weird and wonderful games to play. But I'm not sure that cartridge is the way to go. We've been speaking to nearly all the major software houses over the last month or two, and I think CD has to be the way to go." But why?

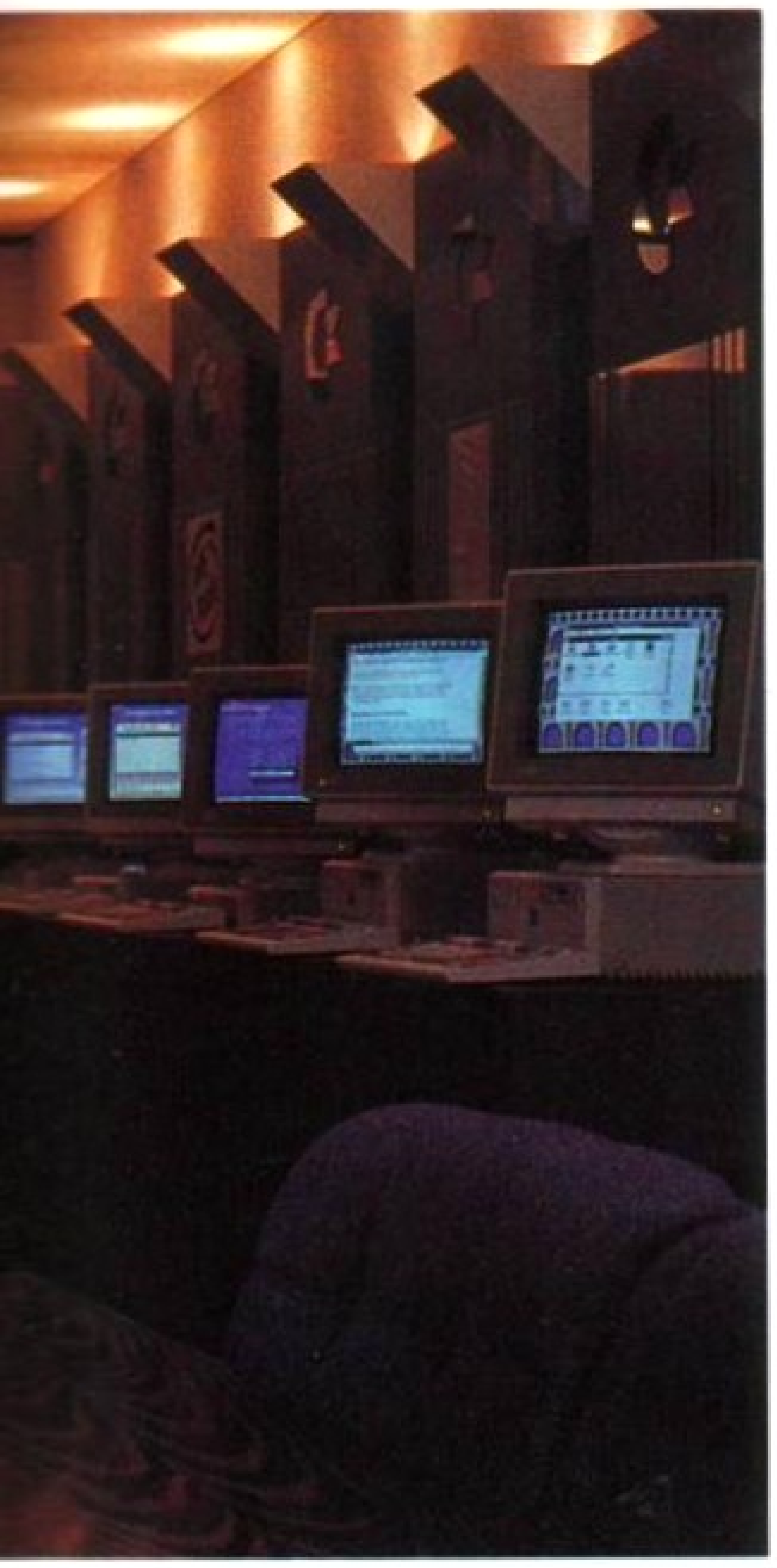
"If you look at the price of a Sega or Nintendo cartridge, it's very expensive. Any cartridge is always going to be more expensive, and also t has a longer lead time. You can press a CD in 48 hours, but a ROM cartridge takes three months. And there are lots of implications as far as cashflow in companies is concerned.

"I'm not saying people won't bring out games on cartridges, but CD is the way we'd like to steer it. We would like to have inexpensive software, and the only way you are going to do that is by having a relatively inexpensive format and to be able to sell mass, so that means CD with no piracy. Disk software could sell cheaper, but they're not willing to do that because of piracy. Cartridges can't be sold any cheaper.

"Our ambition is to make it viable for software houses to sell quality software at £20 or below. We would like to get nearer the music CD price. A CD, to press, with a case, with an inlay, is a couple of pounds. Put that against a cartridge which costs maybe ten pounds. And quite frankly, you're limited in what you can do with a cartridge. Some of the stuff we've got coming out for CDTV at Christmas, you'd have to have a £300-£400 cartridge."

But if CD is to succeed, we'll need to see new games released on it. Is that going to happen? "There's not a lot of people producing games at the moment anyway, because it's summer, but I think that over the next six months you will see that happening from most of the major software houses, I can't say all of them, but most of them.

"And I think probably after Christmas you will see product coming out on CD and not coming out on floppy disk. Because there will be enough CDs there to make it worth their while. And if you asked me to prophesy, I'd say the floppy disk market will be dead inside three years."



mouth

how wonderful this machine was and it started being bought by the masses.

"It's on such a roll now, it will be very hard to stop. We're selling in excess of 300,000 Amigas every year now, to dedicated people who are spending three or four times as much as people buying a Sega or Nintendo, and they've got a very good rationale for doing that. The Amiga effectively grows with them. The machine is so open, you can do what you like with it."

How long can the Amiga last? "Over the last year or two we've been getting the range right by bringing in new chip sets, new machines, new technologies, and that's just the start. There's no reason why the Amiga should ever stop. You may not see it in the base format, as the 500 or 600, but who knows what we're going to have in 10 years' time?"

But will A500 owners be left behind? "The whole idea of the Amiga is to have a product that is graphically and soundwise better than its competition, but is compatible backwards. If we bring out an Amiga 9000 tomorrow, a guy with A500 software should be able to run it. You don't want to throw away everything you've collected."

The times they are a changin' and the A600 is the biggest change to date. Was it designed for the European market? "There are two types of development. You have a chip development, which is led by the Americans. They're the guys who suss out the base of the machine. Then they come along to European meetings, and they say, 'We've got this wonderful chip set: what do we need to build around it? What memory, what interfaces, what kind of casework', and so on, then it gets put together. Something like 85 per cent of Commodore's business is done in Europe, so it would be wrong not to listen to what Europe has to say."

How's the A600 been greeted by the public? "There's always turbulent waters when you have a change, especially something like the A500 which was loved by literally millions, but the sales certainly show that the 600 is picking up and accelerating through the summer, which is something you don't often see." Since launch, 65,000 A600s have been sold.

"In real terms, the 600 offers people everything, and in time will offer them more than the 500 ever did. Look at things like surface-mount technology, and people say 'That doesn't mean a lot to me,' but it does if the machine goes faulty on them. I got the reports of the first three months of failures. Now, at a conservative figure the 500 range was probably 8.5 per cent failure rate. The 600 at the moment is running at less than one per cent. Not only that, but even if it goes wrong you don't have the hassle of sending it back. That has got to be a leap forward."

Then there's the removal of the edge connector (the DMA bus) and its replacement by the PCMCIA bus, the 'credit card slot'. "Obviously times change. The PC bus is now the standard, and increasingly will be the standard, for expansion on a number of different machines, not just the Amiga."

"Our idea is, if you buy the 600 and you want a hard disk, you get it on a PC slot, the size of a credit card, 20 megabyte, 40 megabyte, 60 megabyte, whatever you like, plug it in, there's your hard drive. You don't have to open up the machine, you don't have to bolt on this big, expensive device. And if you want to go down to your mate's and play games off the hard disk, or use utilities off the hard disk, that's all you need, the card. You can just put it in your top pocket and away you go."

"Prices at the moment aren't particularly competitive – like anything on introduction people think they can get more for it than it's actually worth – but you are going to see prices fall quite dramatically over the next three or four months' time."

"Anything that can be done on the DMA bus I am told can be done on the PC bus, so if you take any of the third-party peripherals, they can be done on the PC bus, there is no doubt about that. When we launch the A670, that will be proved. Amiga users will have a much wider range, in time, and a much more cost-effective range."

Commodore are heavily committed to CD as the medium of the future (see panel, left). But the growth of the CD format will be reliant on Amiga owners buying A570s, which have finally gone into full production and on sale in this country at £349. "It isn't just a CD machine, it's an expansion for hard disk and memory too." But how will it sell. "You could say anything from 10,000 to 50,000 in the first six months, up to Christmas. I would say that we would confidently expect to sell in the 20,000 to 30,000 region.

> "We will keep with tradition and have an offering for Christmas. Previously we've been very licence-orientated. The way we're looking at it at the moment is on the quality of the software, not necessarily licences."

"This is really designed for the 1.3 owners and there's something like 500-600,000 of them, so if only 10 per cent upgrade that's 60,000. It's not the product for 1.2 owners. It's 1.3 minimum and 1 meg of fast RAM. So the 1.2 owner is best to trade in for the CDTV." Will Kelly guess when the A670 for the Amiga 600 will appear? "I would be disappointed if we didn't see it just before Christmas."

Aren't CDTV titles off-puttingly expensive, though? "Yes. We will introduce a range in the not too distant future, I would suggest starting at about £9.99. We will also have a budget range. But the big ones are still going to be 35 quid or whatever, because the developer has to make money back. CDTV titles are expensive to develop. Some of the older titles will find their way to £9.99 very quickly."

The Amiga 600 is cheaper to make and more reliable, so does this mean there is room for a price cut? "We've got to look at it in a number of ways. Without being silly, there is no competitor in this market. Which suggests that we should keep the price as it is. But if we altered the price we may gain more sales, knocking some out of the consoles, some out of the PC area.

"It's something that we're considering all the time, on any product, whether it's priced effectively or not. But you've got to release a product and realise what the actual cost is before you make any dramatic changes. It isn't just about selling product: it's maintaining it in the field that is a huge expense and all that kind of stuff."

"I'm not about to say that the A600 will always remain at £399, but the question is whether tomorrow is the time to move. But certainly, one of the reasons behind the A600 and its surface mount was to be able to move with the market if we had to."

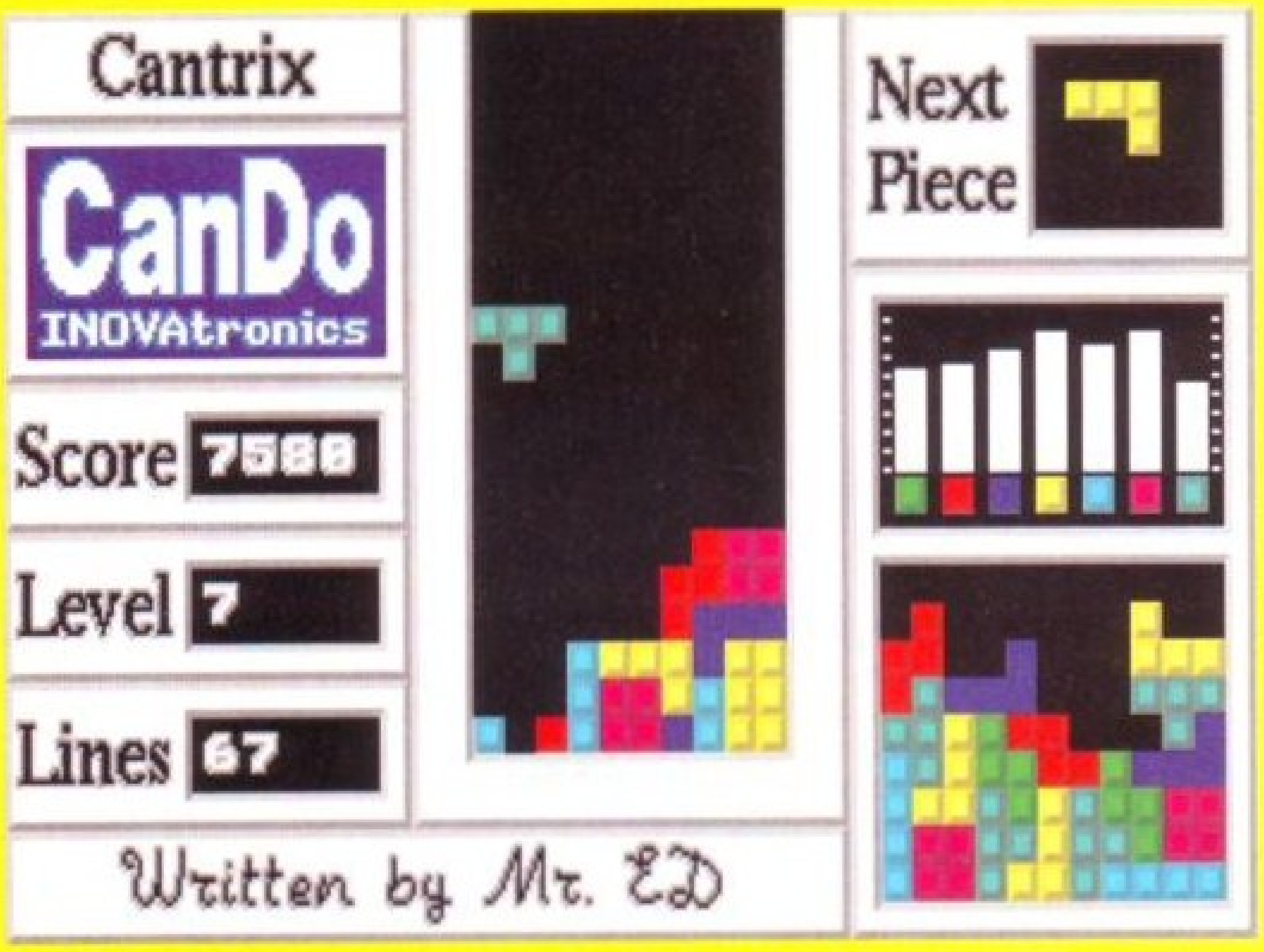
"If we were going to make any moves, to make any difference in sales it would be pre-October. If someone's sitting there saying 'I'm going to buy an Amiga this Christmas' and it doesn't really matter if it's October or even later, then I would wait till October."

Will there be a new A600 pack this year, like the A500 Cartoon Classics of last year? "We will keep with tradition and have an offering for Christmas. Previously we've been very licence-oriented. The way we're looking at it at the moment is on the quality of the software, not necessarily licences."

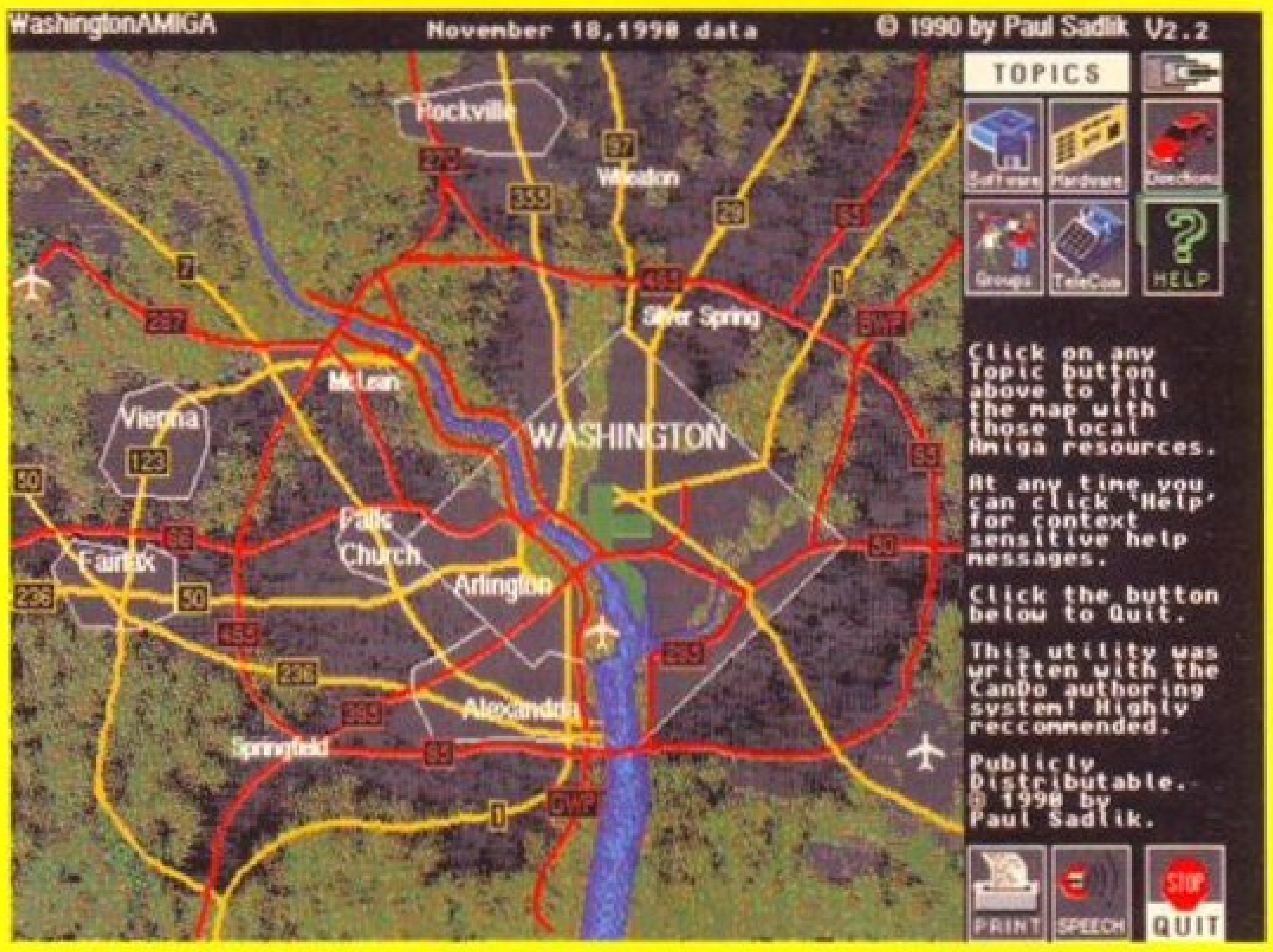
Have Commodore considered a Sonic or Mario character for the Amiga? "Yes. There are a number of options we're looking at that lend themselves to that kind of exposure. But it won't necessarily be at Christmas, it may be a little bit after. We have looked at product that we can hang our hat on and say 'that is a quality product' and not just today, but as the development of the Amiga progresses we can upgrade the software to show the new qualities of what we're trying to bring to the market very, very easily. So if we were to launch an Amiga 5000, something could come out on the 5000 at launch and they could say, 'Wow! Yeah, I can understand that!'"

So, what of new machines? "An Amiga chip set takes much longer to develop than any other chip set. We have a group of people, and all they do all day long is refine and develop the chip sets, until it gets to a stage where we need one. We're continually doing that.

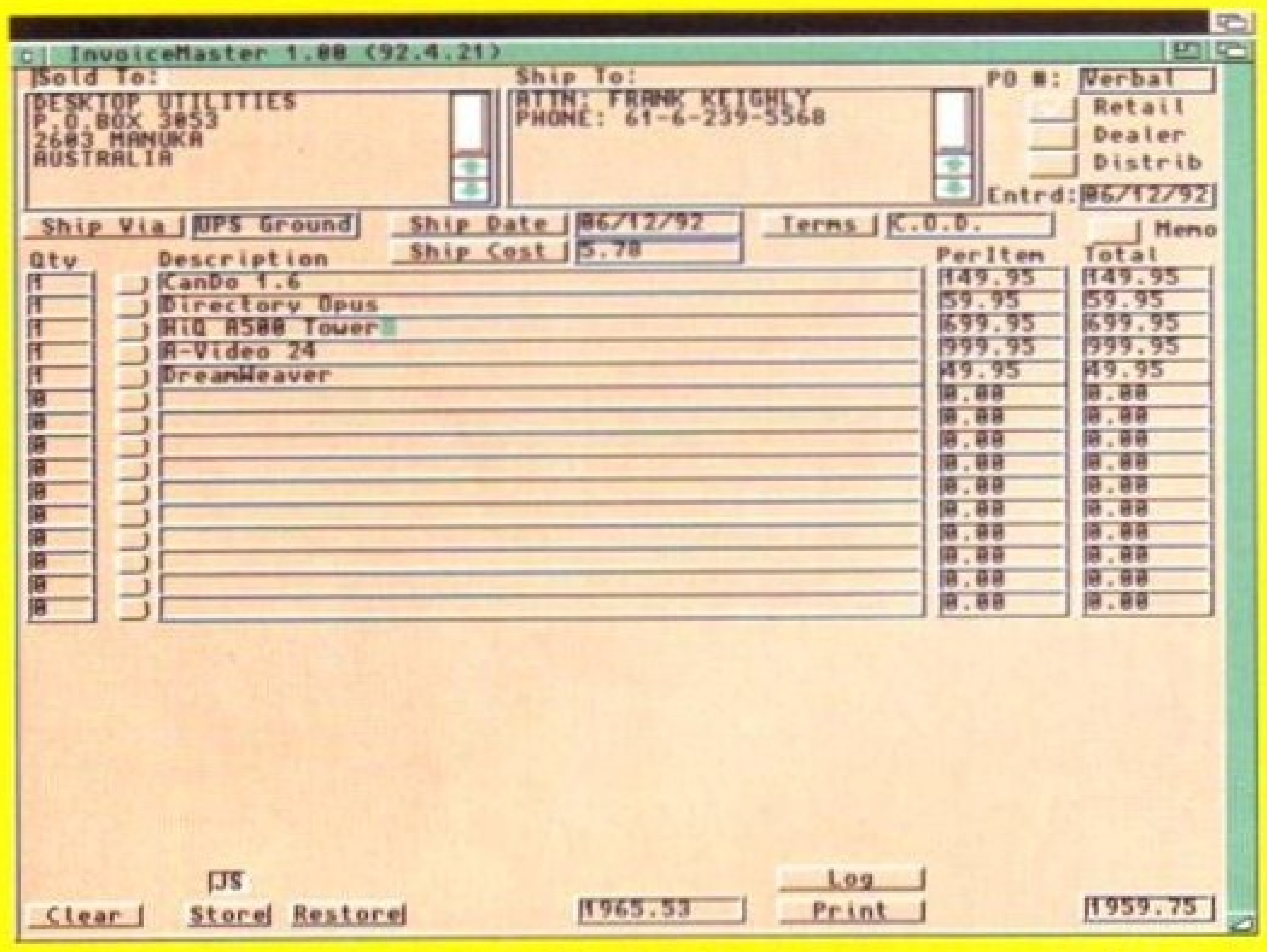
"I think it's best to talk about a new machine when it's factual. We're certainly going to release new machines in time. But I can tell you one thing. There will be a new high-range Amiga in the September-October timeframe, there's no question about that. Higher than the A3000. We've just repositioned the A3000, because we think it was specced up too high. We've effectively halved the price. And there will be a number of new machines in the next year to 18 months or so."



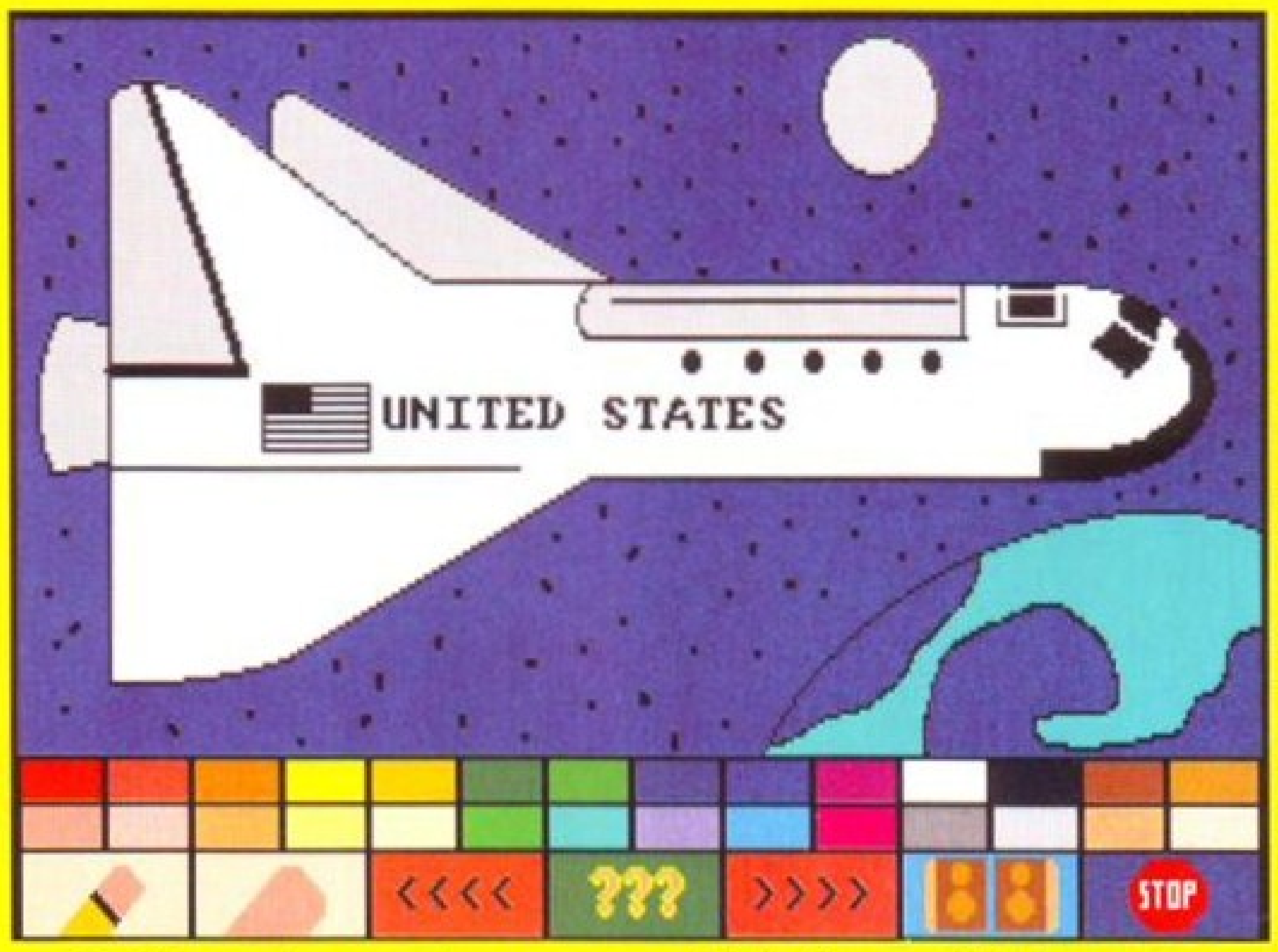
Q: What's unique about this version of this game?



Q: How do you tell the world about the Amiga possibilities in your hometown?



Q: How does a booming software company keep track of *all those invoices?*



Q: How do you keep your kids from driving you nuts on a rainy Saturday afternoon?

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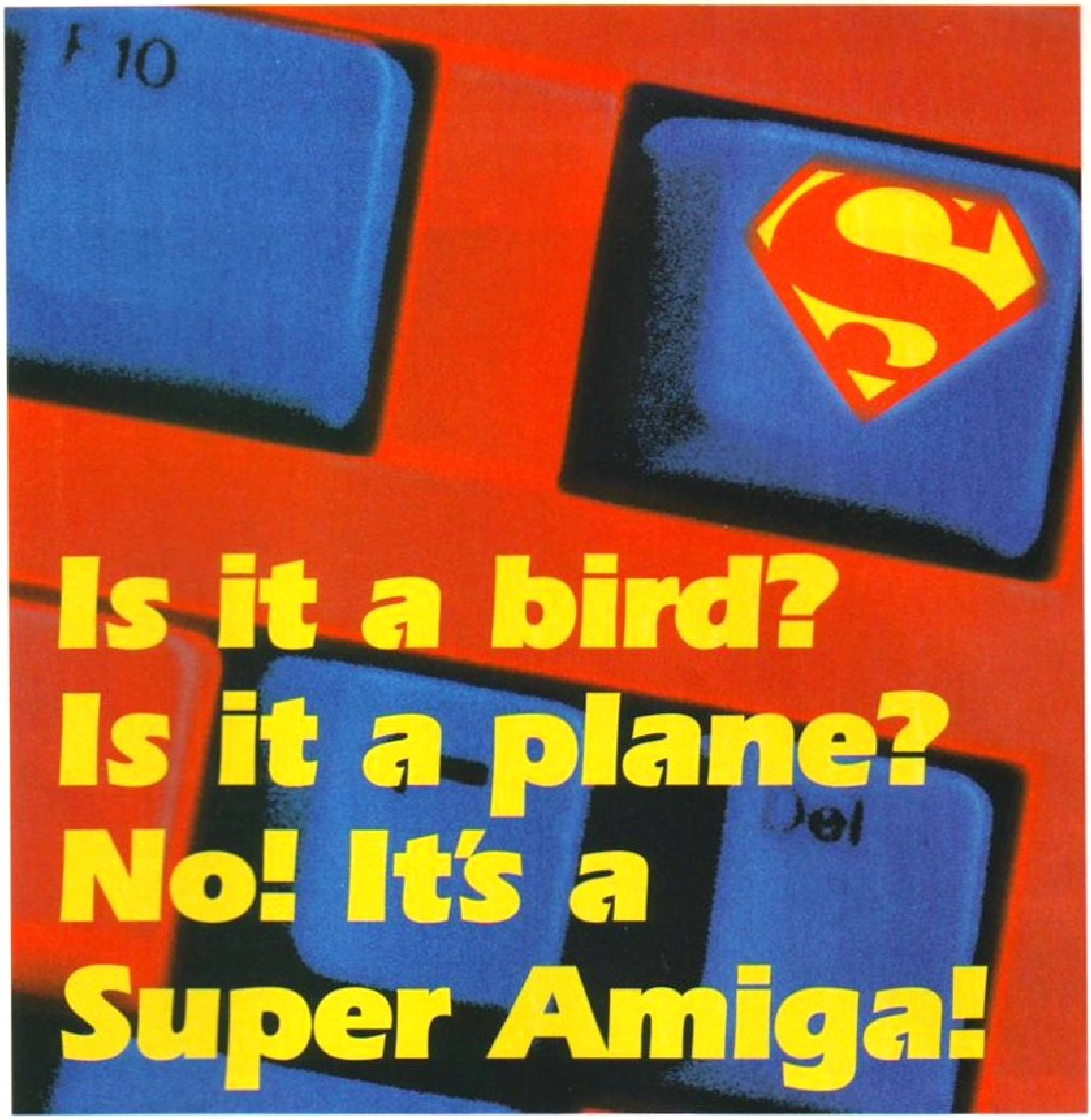
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Is it a bird? Is it a plane? No! It's a Super Amiga!

The A500 is not being made any more, but with well over a million of them in this country alone still alive and kicking, it's far from dead. In fact, there are now more powerful expansions available for it than ever before. **Pat McDonald** shows how your A500 can be turned into a spectacular super machine. Up, up and away...

THE AMIGA IS NOW in a position which other computers envy. There's more software available for it than any other, more new titles appearing than on any other format, and every month in ***Amiga Format*** there are yet more widgets, gadgets and contraptions to make it do ever more outrageous things.

Commodore's announcement earlier this year that the A500 will no longer be made (it's been replaced by the smaller A600) has left many people with the thought that 'it's all downhill from here'. But the doom-and-gloom brigade are a tiny minority. And they are totally wrong.

Back in 1985, Commodore had to find a way of making the original Amiga, the A1000, fit the marketplace. They produced two new machines. One was the A2000, with a huge case and a big power supply to house and feed future wonder boards. It was a machine designed for those for whom money was no object, and its expansion potential was intended to be limitless.

The A500 was designed for the home market and its design was dictated by the need to sell it below the magic £500 barrier, which the computer industry uses to distinguish between the business professional and the home enthusiast. It was never meant to be a wonder machine. But in terms of what specialists call 'architecture' (how a machine is built) it was practically the same as the A2000.

Which meant that you could add more and more and more to your basic A500. Today there are more expansions for the A500 than there are for any other other Amiga, which is down to the ingenuity and improvisation of hardware engineers who have worked out how to squeeze more and more power into one small machine. And, even as we speak, they're refining something even bigger and better which will be out soon...

Techie aspirations: a rough guide to MHz, Mb and I/O

Whether it's a normal upgrade or a supercharged mega-Amiga that you're after, there are four main areas to think about when you're adding to your Amiga. As follows...

CPU SPEED

The Central Processing Unit is the main chip that does all the processing work, and the speed at which your Amiga can do things is governed by what's called the 'clock speed', measured in MegaHertz (MHz), or millions of cycles per second. The higher it is, the faster your Amiga works.

The normal Motorola 68000 CPU in your Amiga runs at 7.14MHz, but this can be replaced with new chips from the same Motorola 'family' – the 68020, 68030 and 68040 in particular – to run at varying higher clock speeds.

DISK STORAGE

The normal way to get a massive amount of storage space on which to keep all of your programs and files is to get yourself a hard disk. Storage space is measured in megabytes (Mb), which is to say millions of characters. An average floppy disk holds only 880K, but there are 1024K in a Mb.

Really massive hard drives which go up to 250 Mb are now available, and if you need even more space there are removable cartridge drives and read/write optical drives to consider. Another massive storage medium is the CDTV disc, which can contain well over 600 Mb of data: but you can only read data from it, not actually use it to store things on yourself.

RAM (RANDOM ACCESS MEMORY)

This is the working area of memory, into which the Amiga loads programs and files when it is running them. RAM is made up of chips, but it is measured in Mb, just the same as storage space is.

The Amiga 500 can be expanded right up to a full 9Mb of RAM, but the most that a program will probably ever need to run is about 4-5Mb, and then that's only for the most powerful of snazzy graphics programs.

INPUT/OUTPUT

This is shortened to I/O, and it covers all the methods by which you communicate with a computer (either the keyboard or mouse) and by which it talks to you (the screen display and the sound). What it also covers is communications with such gadgets as printers and other computers, via the 'interfaces' or 'ports' (sockets, to you and me) on the back of the Amiga.

Most I/O upgrades are a matter of convenience or ease of use rather than the actual power you have, but if you are using your Amiga for something intense like desktop publishing work, the advantages of an improved screen display or a better mouse could become relevant.

This A500 has a 68030 accelerator running at 40MHz, 9Mb of RAM and a 120Mb hard drive – and it's a PC-compatible, too!



WHAT'S INSIDE...

GVP PC286 PC emulator
Not spotted unless you look closely in the photograph. Because this is an 'operating system friendly' emulator, it's really rather slow on a standard Amiga. In conjunction with an A530, the PC286PC becomes quite a viable option.
£249 GVP via Slica 081-309 1111

GVP A530 combined hard drive, accelerator and RAM expansion
The main box attached to the edge connector is the A530. This is the best you can buy – it's also available with a 240 Mb hard drive, but we settled for 120 Mb.

It's also got 8Mb of 32-bit RAM (though the normal model comes with as much or as little memory as you request) and the optional 68882 maths coprocessor (good at doing sums involving fractions). And it has the 40Mhz 68030 CPU which is standard for the A530. List price? A cool £1,516 inclusive!

However, you don't have to spend that much at one go. The base model is 1Mb of RAM, 52 Mb hard drive and no 68882 – I recommend at least 2Mb of 32-bit RAM, so that you can ROM shadow. This copies Kickstart to accelerated RAM, speeding up Workbench and many other programs before the accelerated CPU even comes into play!
£749 base price GVP via Silica 081-309 1111

THIS AMIGA SET-UP is an unusual one, because all those extra goodies come in just one single expansion, in an easy-to-fit box. The A530 is made by GVP (Great Valley Products) in America, the largest manufacturer of Commodore peripherals in the world. Their philosophy is a simple enough one: build the best possible quality, whatever the cost. And, believe me it shows.

GVP hard drives are designed to look as though they are Amiga extras. Although a couple of other hard drive manufacturers have aped this, none look as good as GVP's – the grooves, notches and slope of the A500 are faithfully mimicked. The fact that GVP put a switch on the front, rather than the back, is yet another little bonus.

Under the casing, from an engineer's point of view, the build quality is excellent. GVP were among the first Amiga third parties to start taking all the little logic chips that do odd jobs, and put them into one big chip. This approach is known as VLSI (very large scale integration), and although it started well before the late Eighties, GVP were the pioneers as far as the Amiga scene goes.

This is an astonishing expansion because it all comes in the hard drive box that fixes on the edge connector: so easy to fit, and it doesn't invalidate your warranty!

In terms of performance, their gear is definitely the best. Speed for speed, you can load and save much faster on a GVP hard drive than any other make. Their Series 2 HD500+ hard drive has consistently been rated the best on the market. The A530 is the continuation of that technology.

The A530 also has what GVP call a 'mini-slot' to take further expansions: at present only a PC emulator, the PC286 (reviewed last issue on Page 148), is available for this. When it comes down to it, GVP are expensive. But their equipment is worth every last penny.

A530 HARD DRIVE WITH ACCELERATOR

£749 GVP via Silica 081-309 1111

Installing the A530 is an easy enough job that anyone can undertake. Just take it out of the box, plug in the power and slide it on to the expansion port on the left-hand side of any A500 or Plus.

When it first turns on, it autoconfigures to either Kickstart 1.3 or 2.04, recognising what type of Amiga you have. Very clever – most hard drives are set up for Kickstart 1.3, so getting them to work with an A500 Plus is not that easy unless you know what you are doing.

You get a 40MHz 68030 CPU, 1Mb of 32-bit RAM, and space for a 68882 maths coprocessor. The latter is useful only for programs which actually look out for it – and this is in fact the vast majority of maths-intensive ray tracers. A few game simulations look for one of these two (look for flight simulations released in the last 18 months). The more people that have a 68882, the more software houses will support them. As for RAM, the A530 uses SIMMs for expanding memory. Single in-line memory modules are fairly small, about the size of a stick of chewing gum. However, there is one ever-so slight snag with this design. Only two sockets are provided for RAM expansion, and one of them is already filled with a 1Mb SIMM as supplied.

So your choice when it comes to expanding the 32-bit RAM is a bit tricky – you can either settle for 2Mb by plugging in another 1Mb SIMM, or part exchange the SIMM you've got for a 4Mb version. Two 4Mb SIMMs give, of course, 8Mb of RAM – that's the limit of the A530.

The manual is excellent, well illustrated and clearly written. The supplied software doesn't just get you started – it's useful throughout the lifetime of the drive. Want to plug an extra SCSI drive into the back? No problem – the tools are there to let you do it. GVP have done it again!

AMIGA GOLD FORMAT

94%

This A500 has a 68000 accelerator running at 14MHz, a 60 Mb hard drive, 7Mb of RAM and a rock-steady screen display

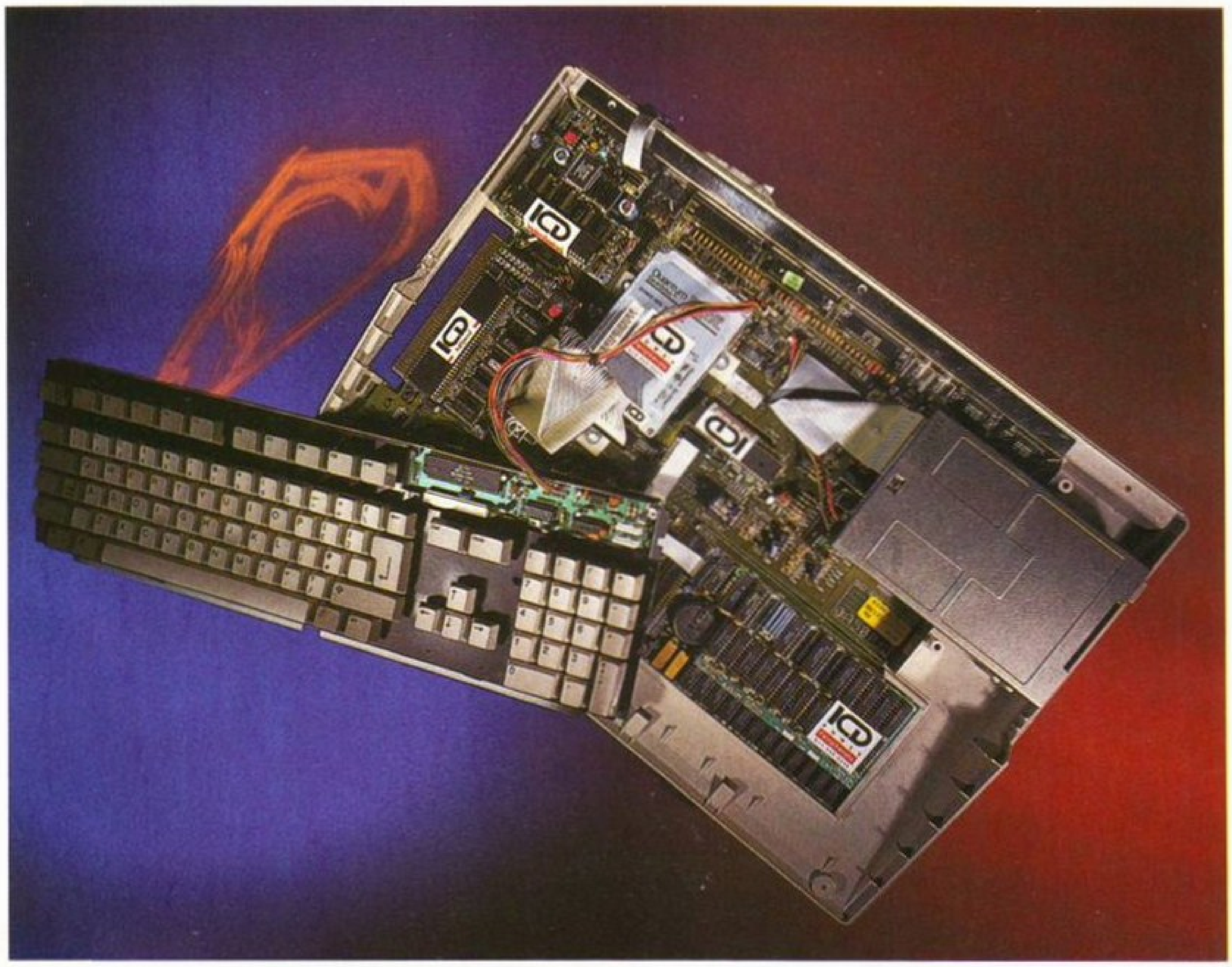
WHAT'S INSIDE...

Flicker Free Video 2
The only way of bringing rock-solid Interlace images to an A500. ICD are currently upgrading their range, exact prices are not easy. The original Flicker Free Video, for example, costs £199, so this should be about £230.
£229.95 ICD via Power 0234 843388

AdIDE/AdSpeed internal hard drive and accelerator combo
The new AdIDE/AdSpeed combination ('combo' board) is even harder to appraise. One AdSpeed will set you back £149, while a 20 Mb AdIDE costs £199. The new combo with a spec like the one we've got (60 Mb) would set you back £650 or more. A 20 Mb version would cost perhaps £300 or so.
£650 approx ICD via Power 0234 843388

AdRAM memory expansion
The AdRAM 540 plus 560D daughter board RAM expansion costs £429, giving 6Mb of RAM. You can buy the 540 for £229, and upgrade it with a 560D later for £199, should the need arise. It remains the only oversize trapdoor RAM expansion that I recommend, simply because it's very well built, well supported and well documented.
£250 approx ICD via Power 0234 843388

So this set-up would set you back in the region of £1,300 just for the expansions.



The beauty of ICD kit is that it all fits inside the A500. The flicker fixer is at the top, the faster processor is just above the keyboard, the hard drive is the big blocky silver thing and the RAM expansion fits into the trapdoor slot area.

THIS AMAZING AMIGA set-up reflects ICD of America's own way of doing things. A quirk of ICD gear is that it's invisible, tucked out of sight inside the Amiga's casing. The theory is that, with the A500 being so spread out, there's really no call to make it any bigger. Just a few square centimetres on the inside is enough to cram in their latest bit of kit.

By avoiding casing and power supplies, ICD can concentrate on build quality and ironing out the bugs in their systems – which translates as better value for money. They never, ever skimp on engineering quality. That's the reason why the ICD AdRAM 540/560 system is the only oversize trapdoor RAM expansion I advocate – because it has a large capacity, and yet never falls over due to taking too much power.

Where can you get hold of a hard drive that fits inside of an A500? Again, ICD are the only company in town that can fit the bill. Using small IDE type hard drives, you can get a 20 Mb, 40 Mb or even 52 Mb hard drive squeezed into the inside of your computer. Although the latter product (the Prima) means having to use external floppy drives.

This approach of 'everything in one box' doesn't just mean more desk space. If you've ever had a porked up Amiga system that needed to be moved, how many power supplies were there to shift? How many boxes and manuals and leads?

Finally comes the bone of contention, the AdSpeed accelerator. It only adds a fractional computing power to the Amiga, nevertheless it is the smallest, cheapest design. A shame it's not very good – but remember, expansions from these guys are always, due to necessity, small. ICD? They're in a class of their own!

ADSPEED/ADIDE
From £300 approx ICD via Silica 081-309 1111

Before, if you wanted to plug in an ICD accelerator (AdSpeed) and an internal hard drive (AdIDE Novia) you couldn't do it. There wasn't space for both to fit on the board. So ICD have combined the two in one, super-duper mini expansion.

This has two snags. AdSpeed isn't an amazing accelerator – it's just a 68000 running at twice the speed. ICD have put extra circuitry on to boost things a little, but you only get a performance increase of 90-100 per cent. The Novia unit does not support extra SCSI units (hard drives, scanners, tape streamers). But it does work satisfactorily – you get a tiny small hard drive in the heart of your Amiga.

Documentation is not special, but is clear and up to date. This is not in the same league as a 68020 or 68030 accelerator – but it does give a certain amount of boost.

AMIGA FORMAT Verdict 78%

FLICKER FREE VIDEO 2
£229.95 ICD via Silica 081-309 1111

When the Amiga is switched to high resolution in the vertical plane – Interlace mode – the screen blurs. This is the only solution for A500 owners. The new version has a major plus: when you return to non-interlaced video displays, version 1 doesn't display it properly – it didn't have an off switch. FFV 2 doesn't have a switch , but it has a couple of pins to solder a switch to – the manual tells you how.

Fitting the board is easy – it plugs into the Denise socket. The quality of construction is very high, the manual is good and you also get a choice of connector in the box. However, unless you are very lucky you still need to have a cable made up to fit it to a Multisync monitor. However Power Computing will supply FFV2, cable and multisync monitor all in one deal, which costs a lot but is worthwhile.

AMIGA FORMAT Verdict 84%

This A500 has a 68030 processor running at 25MHz, 7Mb of RAM, a 160Mb hard drive and a 'true colour' display



WHAT'S INSIDE...

Protar A500 HD hard drive and RAM
Quoth Protar: "We are dropping our prices, but we're not sure by how much. For a bare 52Mb hard drive, we expect to ship for around £279. And for the optional power supply about £30".

Given that you also need RAM, a usable, expandable Protar will cost about £320. Our test drive has a capacity of 160Mb and 4Mb RAM – for that sort of kit a price of £700 would be more realistic.
Base £279 approx Protar 0923 254133

SSL B5000 68030 accelerator
Solid State Leisure are more definite. "We are now only supplying accelerator cards with math coprocessors built in." SSL gear comes with 1Mb RAM, an A5000 model running at 16Mhz costs £249, while a B5000 at 25MHz will set you back £499. The review version (2Mb on board) clocks in at a cool £558.
Base £249 SSL0933 650677

DCTV graphics adapter
The sharp-eyed readers will have spotted a DCTV in the photograph. This is a 'budget' graphics card that allows the viewing of 24-bit IFFs and painting on them. It also includes a digitiser for grabbing images. 5Mb RAM is recommended.
£500 Silica 081-309 1111

Sheesh! That's serious expansion! The huge B5000 accelerator card will just fit in the case, the Protar hard drive occupies the edge connector and the DCTV slots in on the RGB output. There's kit all over the place, yet it's not too messy.

THE DIFFERENCE WITH this set-up is it's not the sole work of one company. It combines a hard drive from Germany, a British accelerator and an American display gadget that gives pseudo 'true colour graphics.

Of course, there is a plethora of companies making equipment of a similar specification, and this page is designed to help you avoid some of the pitfalls.

Solid State Leisure is the only company who make accelerator cards here. SSL gear is cheap because it's not built very well. But it works, has a suite of utilities, and is cheap.

Then there's Protar, who specialise in A500 hard drives. Based in Germany, the quality is very good. Then there's Supra whose equipment is well made, usually reliable, and comes with lots of utility software and documentation. It doesn't look pretty, but it works well.

I could go on and on, dropping names, but instead, here are those pitfalls I mentioned.

When ordering peripherals, always state exactly what sort of Amiga you have. The difference between the A500 and A500 Plus is not that great – but it can be the difference between an expansion working or failing.

For instance, accelerator cards always plug into the processor socket. All well and good, except that some machines have a stray capacitor rising up just below that point – which means the card cannot plug in properly.

There are other pitfalls too. The trapdoor expansion connector on a Plus is different from that on a 500. So expansions like the KCS Bitcon PC emulator have two different versions, and they are not interchangeable.

Building up your system using kit from different parties will cost you more – but you can buy one piece at a time.

PROTAR A500 HD HARD DRIVE WITH MEMORY EXPANSION

£300-700 approx Protar 0923 254133

This looks very similar to a GVP. Surely it's a lower priced clone? Inside though it's a different story – Protar don't use VLSI but all the little chips are surface mounted, giving reliability and longer life. The Protar manual is impeccable.

In use the drive behaves well, reading and writing data at a respectable speed. Unlike a GVP, the disable switch is on the back of the unit and it's secured to the circuit board so is less likely to wear out quickly and easier to replace if it does.

Unfortunately you do not get extra RAM as standard with this model, but it can take up to four 1Mb SIMM modules, or two 4Mb units in a similar way to the GVP. All in all, an excellent drive at a good price.

AMIGA FORMAT Verdict 87%

SSL B5000 25MHZ 68030 ACCELERATOR PLUS 68882

£499 SSL 0933 650677

Made to the usual UK standard: there are a couple of hastily fixed bodges on the board. The manual is a sheet of paper, but most of the documentation is on disk. What you get varies with price – B5000s have a 68030 CPU chip whereas A5000s have a 68020, but from now on SSL will always supply their products with 68881 or 68882 math coprocessor chips. And SSL have just cut their prices yet again.

The B5000 on test performed well. Although a 25Mhz CPU should let an A500 run just as fast as an A3000, in tests it never came quite up to the level. It was close in many cases, but it never went quite as fast. This is down to the A3000 being designed around the 68030 from the beginning.

AMIGA FORMAT Verdict 80%

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NEW! CDTV DRIVE



Commodore have announced their new CDTV drives for the Amiga 500 and 600 computers. Simply plug the drive onto your Amiga and you have the power to:

- **USE THE SUCCESSFUL RANGE OF CDTV SOFTWARE.** A vast array of titles are available now and more are being released all the time. With the CD's ability to retrieve 540Mb of data (over 610 Amiga floppy disks!), it is the ideal media for entertainment, music, education and more!
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To use the A670 CD-ROM drive, your Amiga must have 1Mb of chip RAM. All A600s and A500 Plus models are fitted with 1Mb of Chip RAM as standard. If you have a non-plus version of the Amiga 500, your computer will require an internal modification which Silica can perform for you. Please call quoting ref: REA 1000.

There are two versions of the CD-ROM drive:

Amiga 500 (all models) - Ref: CCD 0570
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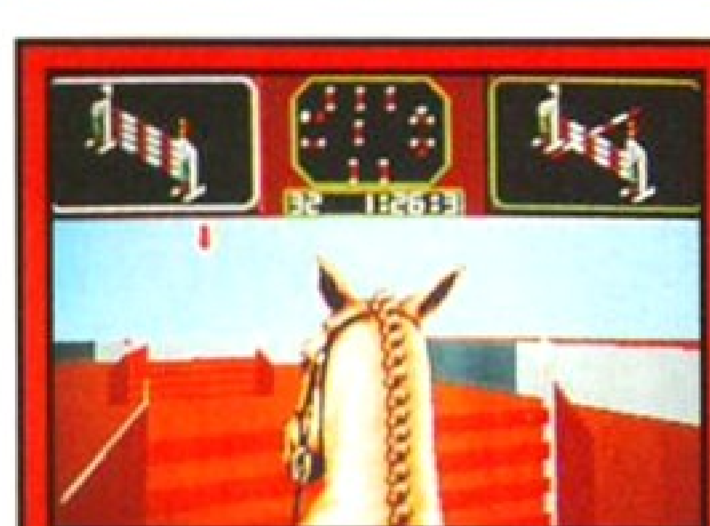
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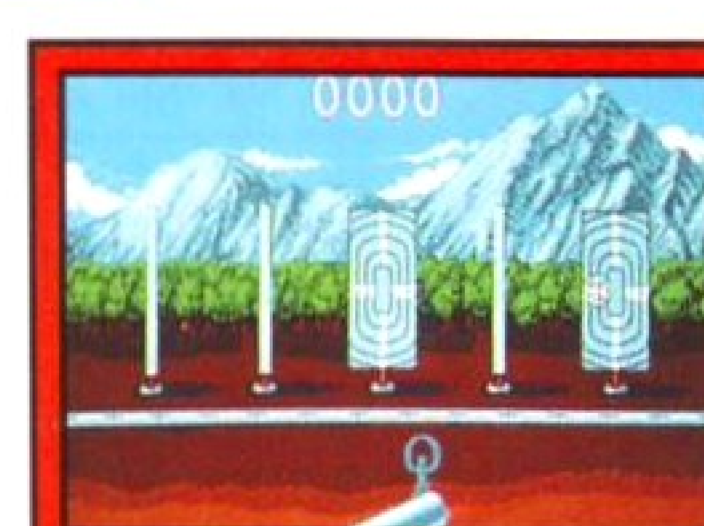
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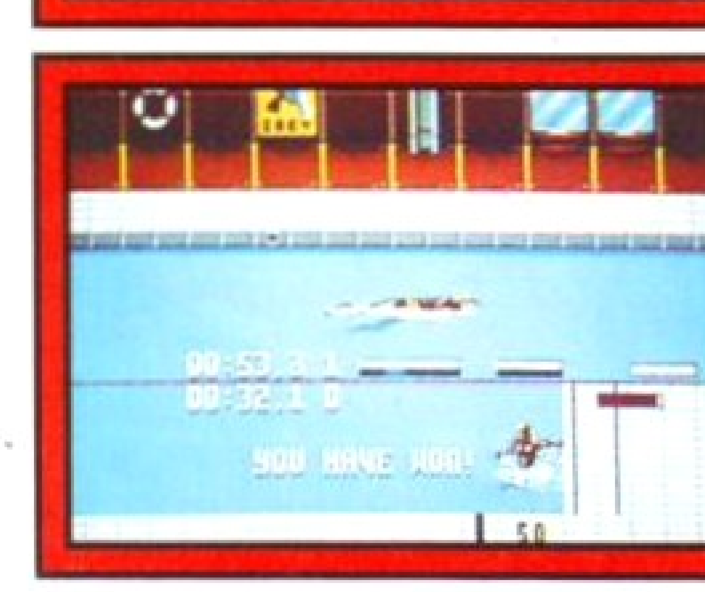
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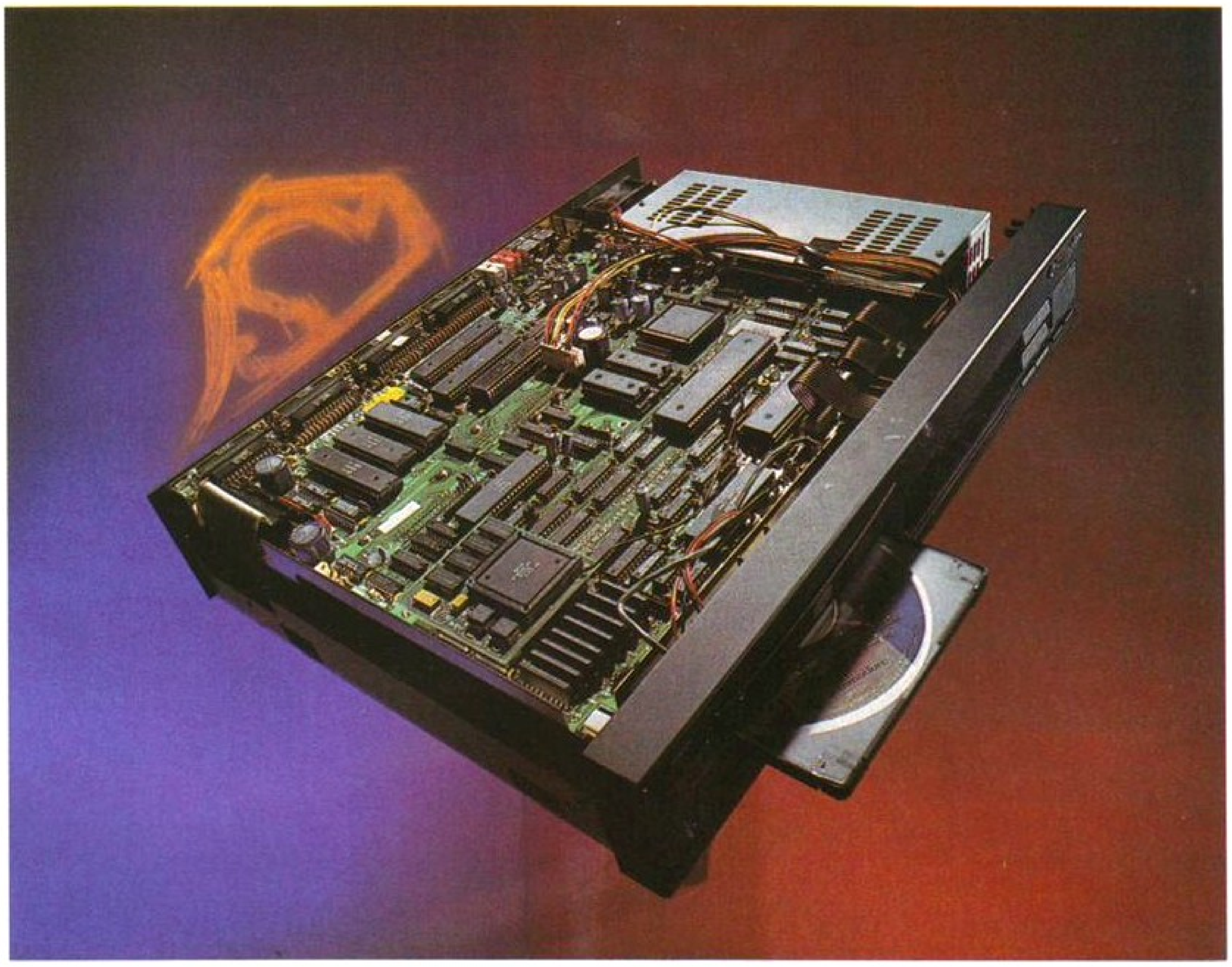
WHAT'S INSIDE...

CDTV plus keyboard and disk drive with 1Mb chip RAM expansion fitted
This is only being stocked by Calculus, who do the conversion themselves. Although it offers little in the way of speed or storage increases, it does at least give you more memory available for when you are using the machine as a true Amiga. It also has the undeniable good looks of a CDTV, without any unbecoming great gadgets that some Amiga's have protruding.

Although maybe not a 'Super Amiga' by the standards that we've previously talked about in this feature, this version of the CDTV does have one undeniable, if temporary advantage. It can play CDTV titles as well as audio music CDs – which is something that no A500 or Plus can do at present, although that will change when the A570 starts to go on sale.

So is it worth going out and investing in one or not? Well at £699, maybe not – but if you are going to buy a CDTV anyway, this is the only one that is really worth considering. It's going to work with far more software, it's going to give you more frames in *Deluxe Paint* and it will give you longer sound samples and bigger databases. Maybe not exactly a 'Super Amiga' – but certainly a 'Super CDTV' until Commodore start making new ones that is.

£699 Calculus 0543 251275



Inside the 2Mb CDTV there is more room for expansion than many people expect. You can even fit a hard drive, though you won't get the case back together!

With the A500 no longer on sale, how are the expansion possibilities of a machine that was designed to be even less expandable?

Pretty good. The CDTV I'm talking about here is only available from one source (Calculus) and has the unusual addition of an extra megabyte of chip RAM. That means that, in theory, it's more compatible with the huge range of software than the standard A500 Plus because CDTVs have the earlier Kickstart 1.3 rather than 2.04. (Though it's really called Kickstart 3.1, because half of the ROM is given over to being a CDTV.)

So how good an Amiga is it? Well, there is still the problem of having no fast RAM – although there are utilities which remap chip RAM as fast RAM. You can't do this the other way around, by the way.

OK, so the processor and custom hardware is much the same as the Amiga. How about a keyboard? CDTV keyboards are identical to A1500/A2000/A3000 keyboards, but black, with a different connector. No worries there.

How about the floppy disk drive, necessary to use the CDTV as an Amiga? Um... any old Amiga external drive will do actually – and you can buy black ones too. What about hard drives? Surely you can't fit those into a CDTV? Well, actually the Novia units from ICD do fit inside and work. In addition, SCSI interfaces are on the way which plug into the expansion connector in the CDTV.

Accelerators? Again, the answer is yes, although a qualified one. The processor on a CDTV is the same as an A500 – a 68000 chip. The problem is fitting them in: you can't get the lid back on the CDTV! However, accelerators do work with the CDTV, if you can live without a case.

CDTV 2MB RAM CONVERSION

£699 Calculus 0543 251275

So, what do you get? Not much actually – just a standard CDTV with it's Agnus chip removed and a board with a different Agnus chip stuck into the socket. But it comes with keyboard, disk drive and some sample CDTV software, too. It all adds up to a CDTV with 2Mb of chip RAM rather than 1Mb.

"Big deal!" I hear you mutter. But the difference is important. I have yet to find a way to turn off the drive in a CDTV, and that drive takes away memory from the system. Which means that there's less memory for programs – especially games.

In quite a few cases, as A500 Plus owners know only too well, having lots of chip RAM does not help. The number of software failures you get depends largely on the age of the software that you are trying to run – usually, the older the software, the less likely it is to work. There is one exception to this, and that is when a major game is re-released as budget software. Usually it is tweaked to work with an A500 Plus – which will make it compatible with this system too.

On the serious side, having a lot of chip RAM and no fast RAM is not usually a bad thing. Although older programs insist on having some fast RAM (especially animation programs) later versions of *Deluxe Paint III* and all versions of *DPaint IV* will happily use chip or fast RAM.

Other types of serious program, word processors, databases, and spreadsheets, don't care a fig what type of memory they are using, just so long as at least 1Mb is available and free. There are very, very few exceptions to this. Some programs enjoy having lots of chip RAM. Video titling software loves it, using it to store many pages of titles and images. Sound sampling software likes chip RAM too.

It would be wrong for me to say "this is a great Amiga, really fast and very powerful". But it does have the advantage of the CD capability and it would be just as wrong for A500 users who haven't even got 1Mb of chip RAM to laugh at it – it can do more than your machine, matey!

Amiga Format Verdict: 75%

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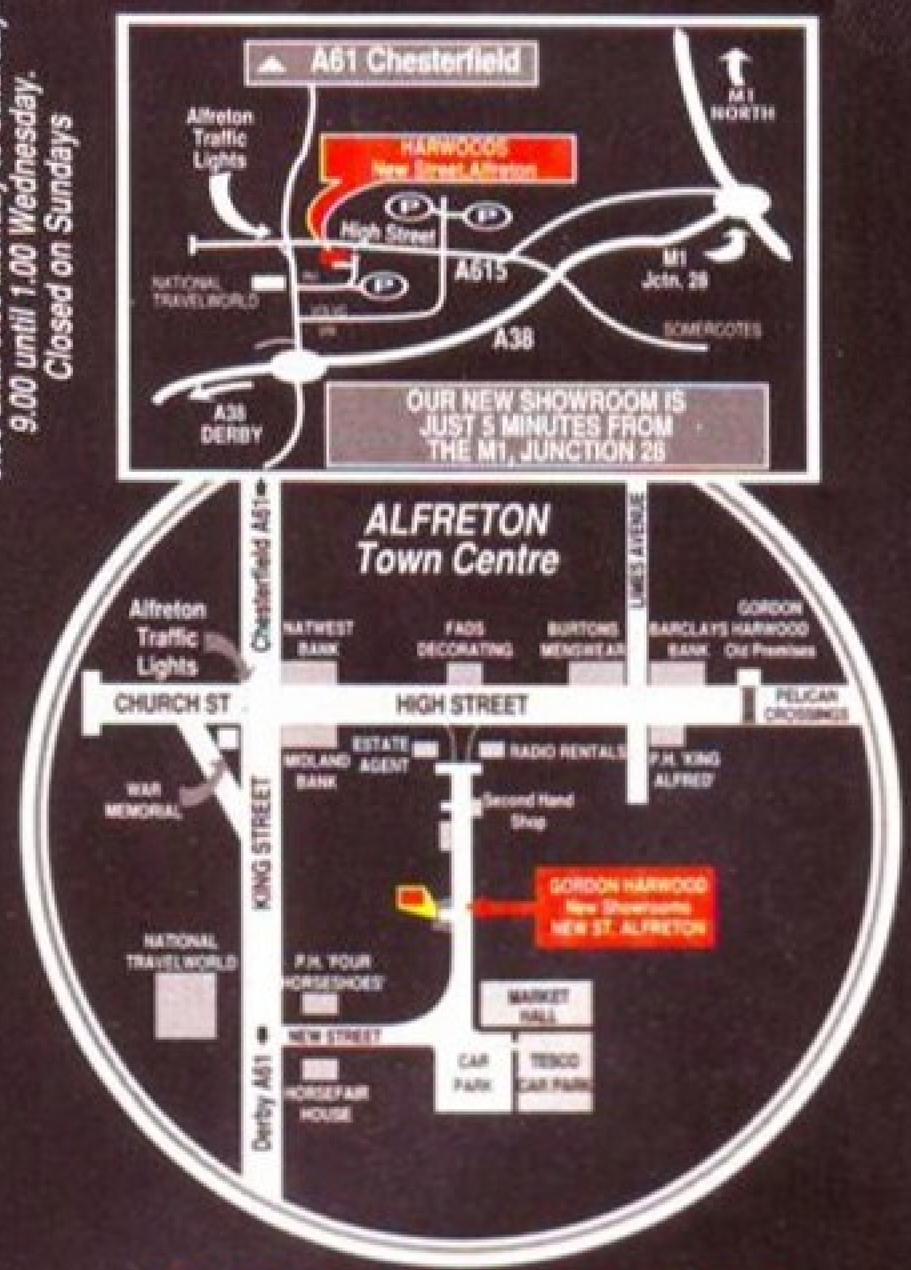
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WHO CARES - WINS

What's different about Amiga Format reviews? **Neil Jackson**, Screenplay's Editor, tells you...

"It's another month, and as always there are plenty of games shouting at you from their shelves. That's where we come in – to help you make the right decision. We give you the real truth about the games we test – there are no incentives, no back-handers and no threats that can change an *Amiga Format* reviewer's opinion. If a game's bad, it's bad – whoever made it!

"We're different to other magazines because we don't see any point in reviewing games before they're finished. Instead, we wait until we have the finished goods in our hands. That way we can look it it from the most important point-of-view there is: YOURS!

"We're committed to bringing you the most complete picture, based on the full facts. We've all been burned from time to time, and we know how it feels, so we're determined to make sure that *Amiga Format* lives up to its reputation as the games-players' champion. If we can stop just one person from wasting their money on a duff game, we're happy . So trust us - we're the software doctors..."

THE REVIEWERS

So what are we playing in our spare time this month? Here's what keeps us going...

MAFF EVANS
"*Kick Off 2*. I got into it while I was researching for background material on Sensible Soccer."

CLARE HODGSON
"I've been having a bash at *Volfied* because it's still great fun and I like it."

MARCUS DYSON
"I'm still playing *Fire and Ice* a lot, and also *James Pond Robocod*. Sad, isn't it?"

ANDY NUTTALL (MRS)
"Blimey! I thought I had to play games all day - not all night as well! *Monkey Island 2*, then."

TIM HOWELL
"*Rugby World Cup*, because I'm a Kiwi and I've been reliving beating the Aussies again."

ASAM AHMAD
"I reckon *Links* is the the deal for me – it's so realistic I can almost believe I've been let out of my cage for a day."

JAMES LEACH
"You'd think I'd be bored with it, but I'm not. I'm going to get married to *Formula 1 Grand Prix*!"

TIM SMITH
"I've been up to my ears in *Lure of the Temptress* this month. It's good to see a real challenge to all the Lucasfilm adventures."

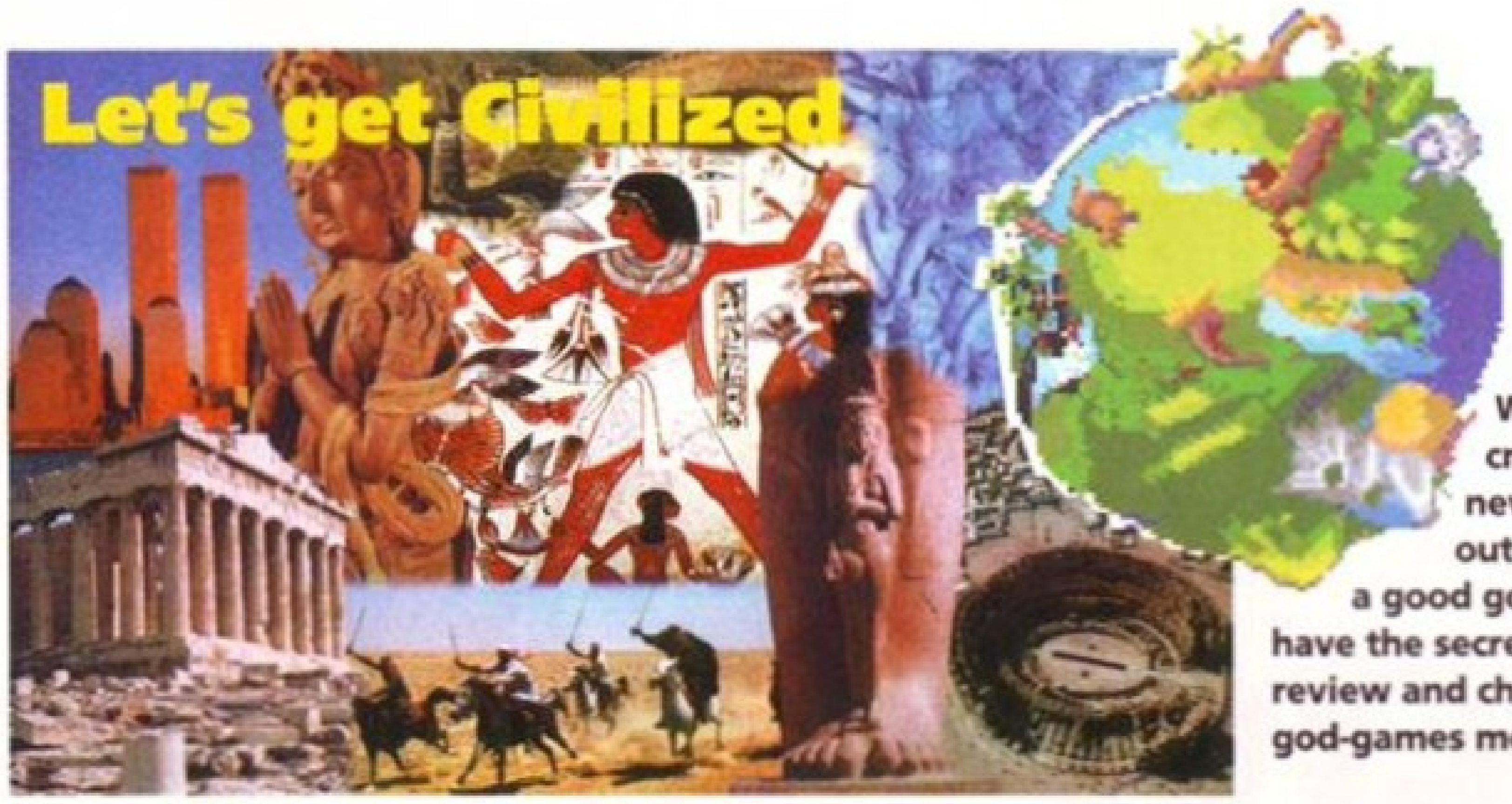
PAUL TYRRELL
"*Crazy Cars 3* is where it's at for me! It's smooth and fast, and I can't put it down."

ED RICKETTS
"I'm having a ball with *Sensible Soccer*, but *Civilization* is my fave, it's just so big."

JON PILLAR
"Virgin's *Lure of the Temptress* is really good - there are lots of little touches of humour."

Screenplay

Greetings. You've reached the section of the mag where the fur flies, the critics crush and the games go ga-ga. In the name of science, please don't turn the page without first washing your hands and kissing the blarney stone.

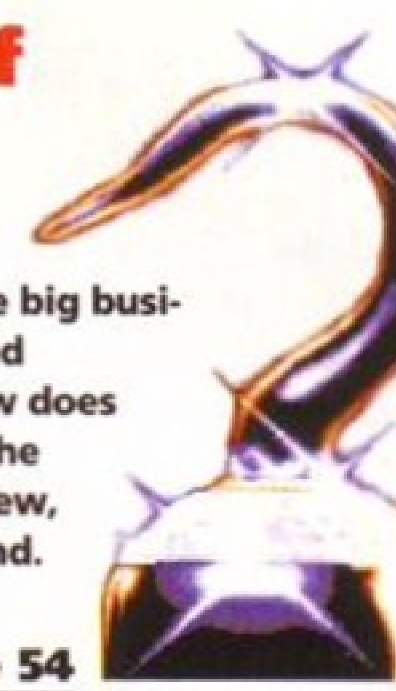


We interview Sid Meier, creator of MicroProse's new *Civilization*, and find out what it takes to make a good god-game. Does Sid have the secret? Find out in the full review and check up on the best god-games money can buy

Page 48



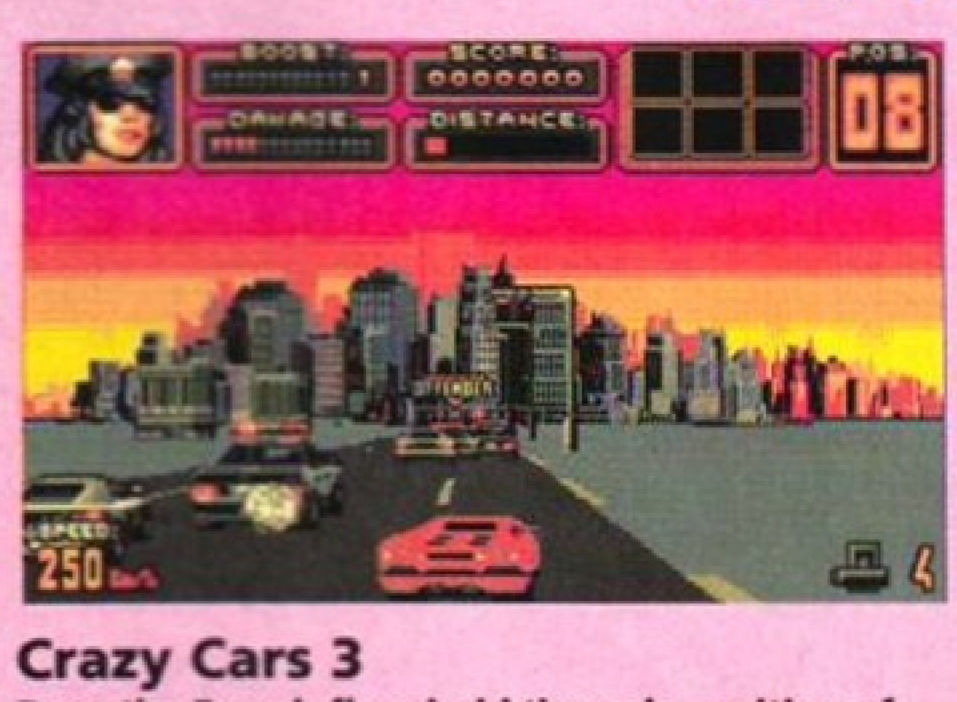
The Hook of the hype



We're living in a material world, and film-licences are big business. Do licensed games and in-game adverts work? How does Ocean's *Hook* compare to the film? See our in-depth review, and make up your own mind.

Page 54

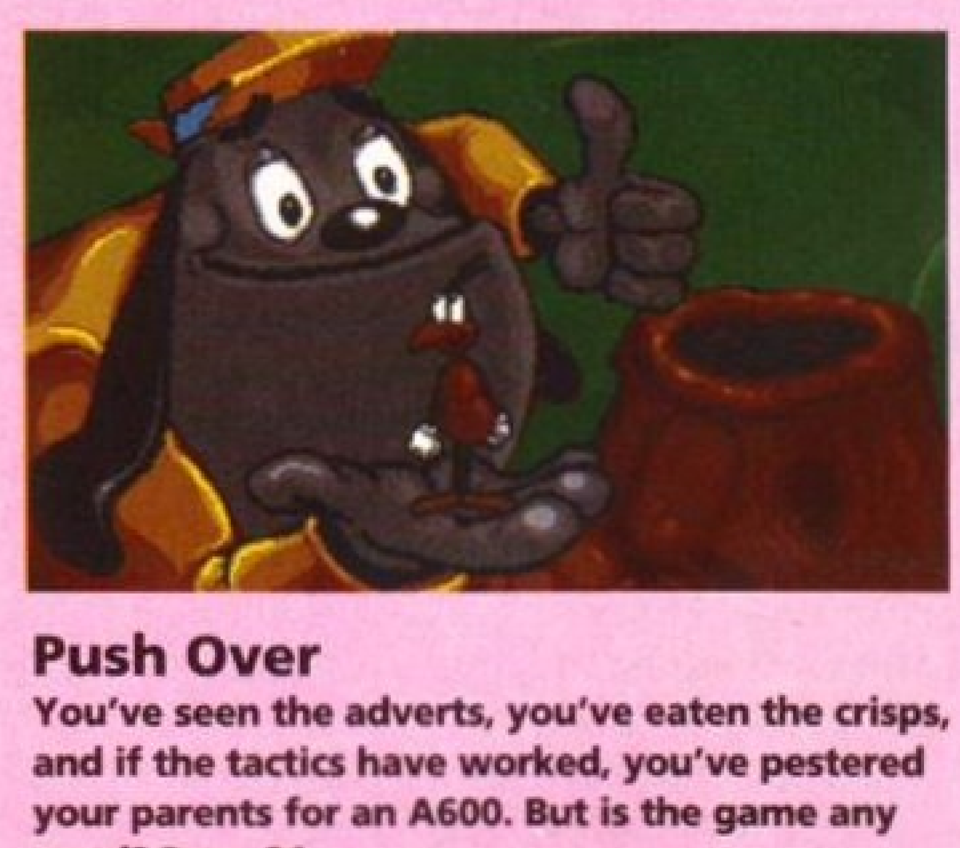
THE BEST OF THE REST



Crazy Cars 3
Does the French flyer hold the pole position of Amiga racing games? We take it for a few high-speed laps around the track before the cops can catch us. Page 64

MegaTraveller 2
The space-cadets role-playing game makes it to its second incarnation on the Amiga. Is it any better this time? Join with us as we enlist in the Imperial Armed Forces. Page 68

Mega Fortress
Fancy taking a decrepit old B-52 up for a flight? Mindscape have converted one to near-stealth capability, but we reckon it'll never get off the ground - are we right? Find out on... Page 74



Push Over
You've seen the adverts, you've eaten the crisps, and if the tactics have worked, you've pestered your parents for an A600. But is the game any good? Page 84

Maybe you've seen his name on a *Railroad Tycoon* box, and wondered just who the hell he is. But now you need wonder no more. Sid Meier, games-designer and programmer extraordinaire from MicroProse's USA headquarters, talks to **Neil Jackson** about how a classic game is made.

In the world of games, there have been few games which give you the world to play with. Sid Meier's ***Civilization*** offers you the chance to lead a vast range of cultures on to global supremacy, if you've got the time.



The dawn of Civilization

What gave you the idea for your latest game, *Civilization*?

Sid Meier: "I was basically trying to do another constructive game, or god game as they're called sometimes. You know the type of thing: you start with an empty world, you create something of your own construction, and develop it. We *[that's Sid and his colleague, Bruce Shelley – more information on him later...]* were looking for ideas, and *Civilization* seemed natural – it fit the mould and gave you plenty of room for growth and long-lasting playability.

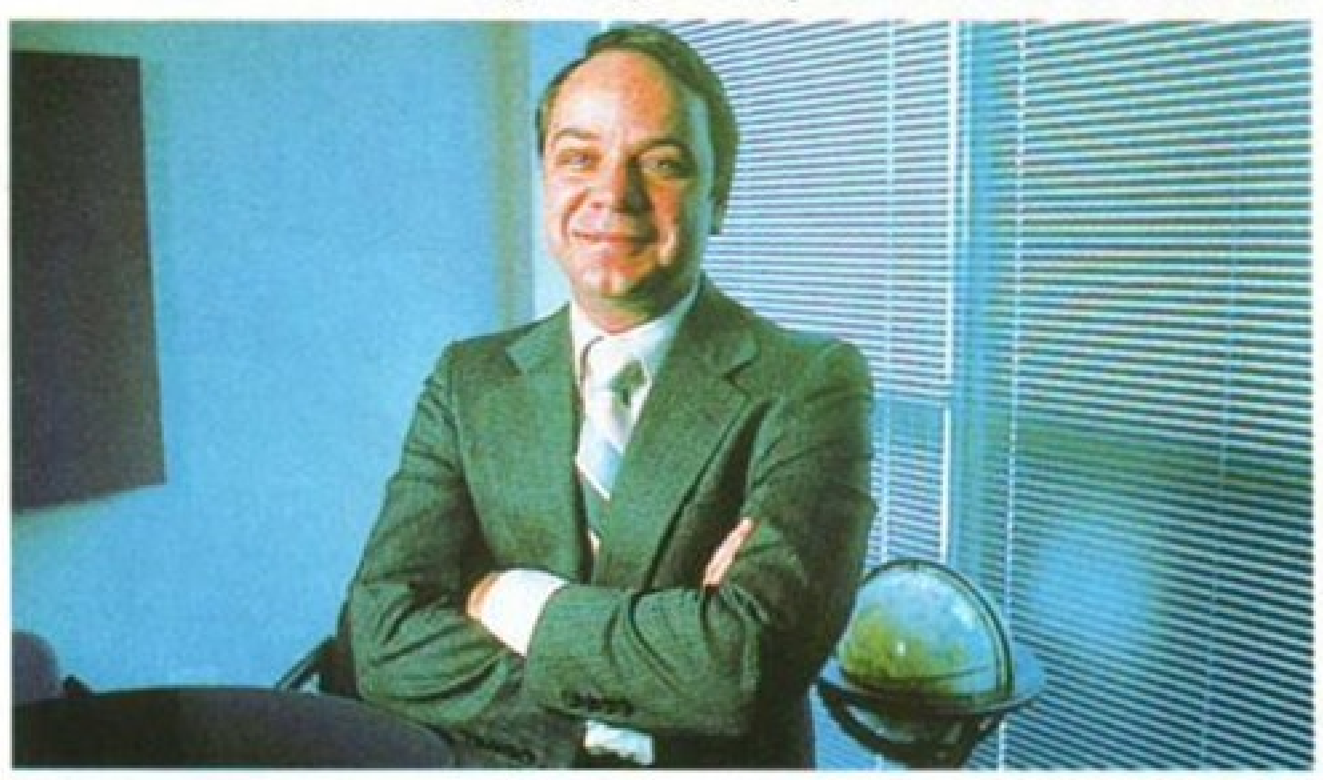
It has several threads, or role-playing 'hats' as I call them – like in *Railroad Tycoon* which put you in charge of operating, financing and constructing a railway. *Civilization* has you playing in the role of military commander, economic planner, scientific researcher, politician and city mayor – that's enough to give you plenty of scope and possibilities. It's also a subject that everybody knows, or thinks they know, something about before they play, and that helps people get started more easily."

God-games are always more complicated to play than your basic arcade or racing type of games, but this doesn't necessarily mean that they're any more difficult to make. How long did it actually take, from conception to completion, to design and create *Civilization*?

Sid Meier: "We spent two-and-a-half years on the entire project, which does seem like a pretty long time. But the first year was used up just thinking about the idea and developing it. The actual work, the programming and testing, took around a year and a half after that."

What was the most difficult part of the concept to implement?

Sid Meier: "The worst bit was right at the very beginning. I really wanted it to be more like



Sid Meier: "We're very much games-players here at MicroProse, so I write the kind of games that I want to play which aren't already out there yet."

Sim City: more automatic, where you do broad brush-stroke kinds of things that have a global effect. The trouble was that in practice, you end up feeling as if you're only watching, and not really getting to grips with something that's supposed to be your own.

"So we changed our *Civilization* idea, simplifying the game so you felt like you owned and understood what was going on and knew how it all fitted together. After that, the game's many causes and effects were easier to cope with. But it meant we had to make the jump from the big global model, like *Sim City*, to a far more explicit and involved situation, like *Civilization*. That's a lot more difficult to get working."

Were there any ideas which you would have liked to include in *Civilization*, but didn't, or couldn't for whatever reason?

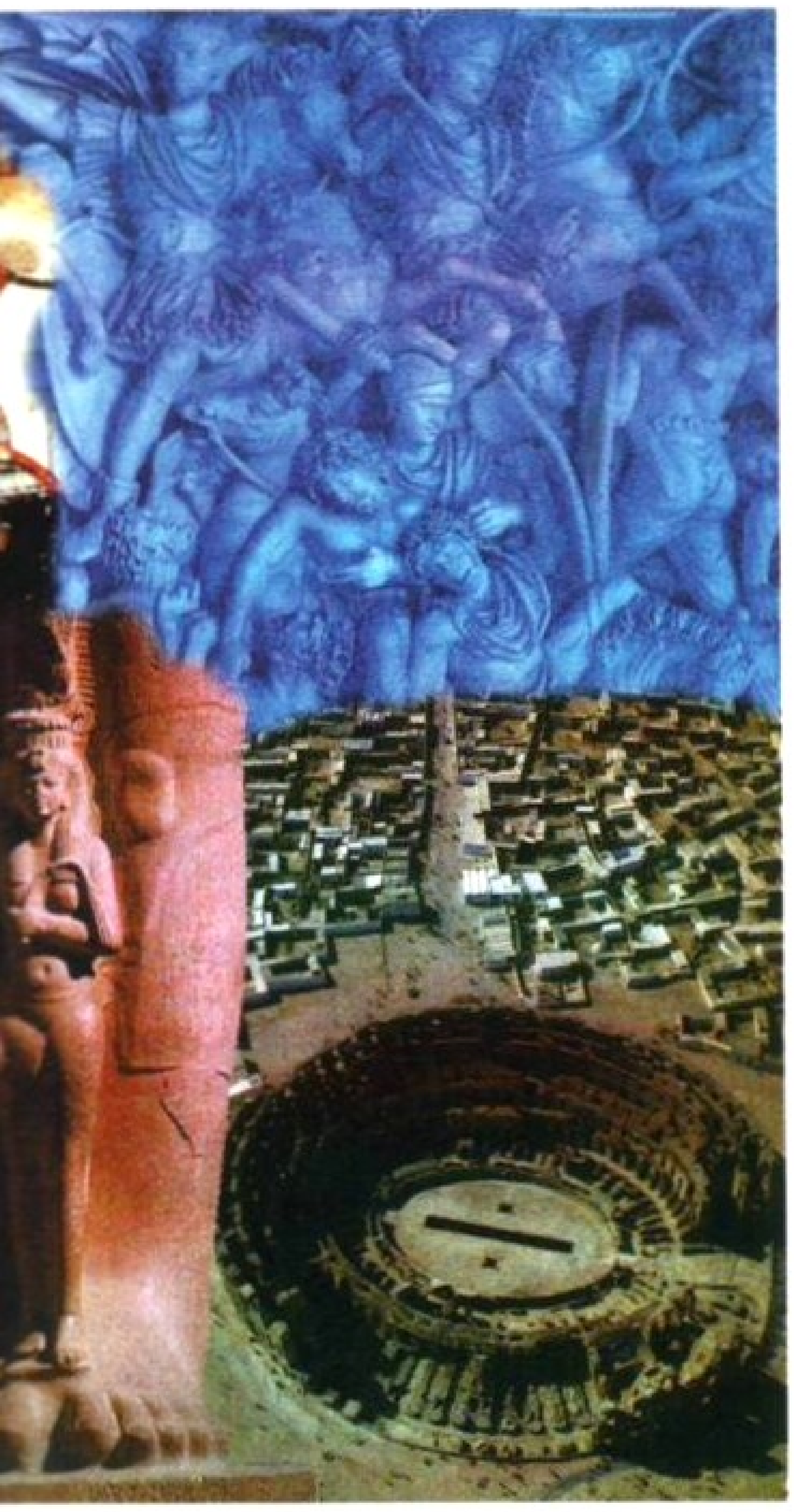
Sid Meier: "I wanted you to be able to form alliances and non-aggression pacts with the other civilisations. This would have enriched the political aspects of the game. But it was far too difficult to manage – if the allies wanted to break the treaties and you didn't, then you'd end up blaming the designer – not the other civilisations – so in the end we just had to simplify the whole political situation so that it was easier, but less rich.

"Also, the thing everybody was asking for was multi-player capability. The trouble was that *Civilization* wasn't designed with this in mind and it would have been a major redesign to get it operating. The whole thing just becomes too big – but it's still an idea we're thinking about for a game in the future, maybe.

"We also wanted to get more modern technology units in the game – things like nuclear submarines and stealth planes and so on. The trouble was, the further we brought forward the technology, the longer you had to be able to play the game, or the new things you'd just bought would only have a short life before the game ended. When we started putting in modern units, people started asking for futuristic units, like space-fighters and so on, and then we just simply had to call it a day – we had to end the game somewhere, and we'd already reached 2020 AD!"

What's your next design likely to be about? We've heard rumours about dinosaurs, human-body defence systems, and North Pole or Everest explorations. Are you working on any of these now?

Sid Meier: "We're still working on ideas and we haven't settled on anything certain just yet.



We're still working on language translations of *Civilization* for Germany and other countries, so we haven't got to the stage where we're fully clear of the last game yet!

"We play around with ideas until one starts to get momentum. Often, ideas sound good at the start, but after a couple of weeks bashing them around, it's obvious that they're not going to work, so we go back to square one. I guess you could say that we're still in our exploration phase!"

AF Of the MicroProse designs, which one was your favourite in terms of design success and pride in the finished result?

Sid Meier: "Often it's simply the last one I did. *Civilization* I'm very happy with at the moment. I learned a lot from *Railroad Tycoon* and so that's still got a lot of good memories for me. It has a few rough edges (which I think I've improved upon since), but I still enjoyed it a great deal.

"*F-19 Stealth Fighter* (going back a bit) still pleases me, as do *Pirates* and *Silent Service*. They're all old games now, but I still have a special place for them. I guess they're all my favourites. Some get almost all the way there, some get part of the way there, but *Civilization* seems to have topped them all. At least for me it has, anyway."

AF Can you still bring yourself to play any MicroProse games, or are you fed up with them all now?

Sid Meier: "I seldom go back and play my old games, because I play them to death while I'm

Continued on page 51

The Amiga Format UNOFFICIAL top ten god-games

1 Railroad Tycoon
by Sid Meier for MicroProse



It's been surpassed by ***Civilization,*** and it's a year or so out of date now, but I don't care – there's something about ***Railroad Tycoon*** which none of the other games can match: a total lack of violence. Sure, you get a chance to be really horrible to your opponents, but you can only hit them where they hurt the most – the wallets. But it's still the best test of your brain's ability.

92% ***Amiga Format*** 22

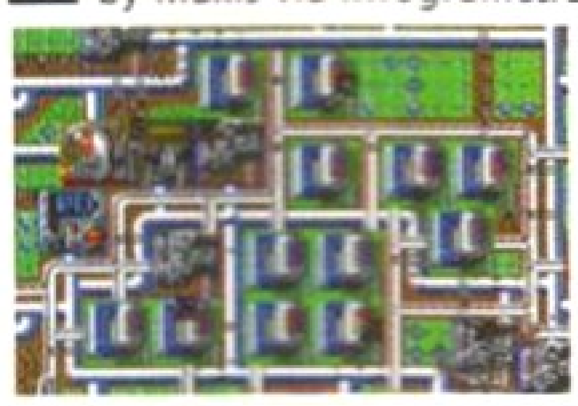
2 Civilization
by Sid Meier for MicroProse



Perhaps this one's only second because I haven't had time to play more than a few games yet. The acid test is whether or not it's still fun six weeks later – so far it shows all the right signs. With a complete game weighing in at around a week's worth of misspent evenings, you're going to have plenty to get on with here.

94% ***Amiga Format*** 38

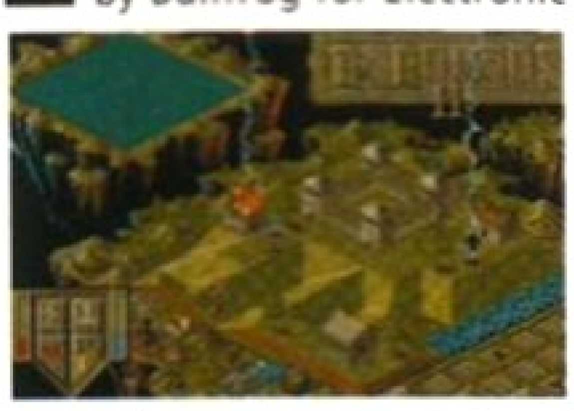
3 Sim City
by Maxis via Infogrames/Digital Integration



This is generally regarded as 'the one that started it all' – the first god-game. It's got a lot of good ideas which have since been pinched and borrowed a hundred times over, so it deserves some recognition for that. But it tends to lose its shine after a few plays – and the bug-ridden traffic will drive you nuts.

92% ***Amiga Format*** 6

4 Populous 2
by Bullfrog for Electronic Arts



A cross between ***Sim City*** and ***Civilization*** with three dimensional graphics thrown in for free. It's not quite got the size of either of those titles, but it's got just as much depth and variation. There are hundreds of strategies to try out against a variable-difficulty computer player – providing a guaranteed long-term interest. There's even a null-modem link so two humans can play on different Amigas – an excellent way to find out who your friends are!

95% ***Amiga Format*** 30

5 Deuteros
by Ian Bird for The Disc Company



A space-age god-game in a class of its own. Hours of strategy and decision-making, and a story which unfolds as you progress. It's not as involved as the rest, but the feeling of all-powerfulness and empathy for your subjects make it justifiably a god-game nonetheless. Drags you in and doesn't let go.

95% ***Amiga Format*** 21

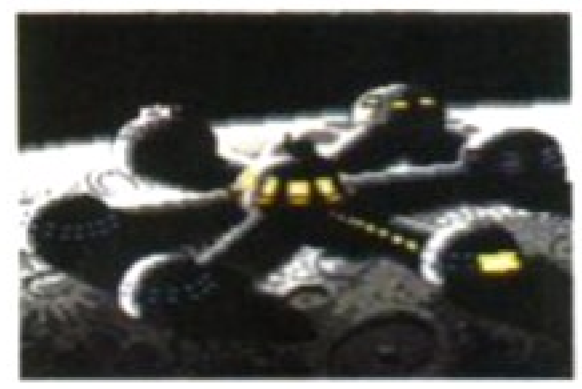
6 Sim Ant
by Maxis via Ocean



They may not be worshippers, but they're still your flock. ***Sim Ant*** is a strange god-game, but it qualifies because your main aims are the same: go forth and multiply, hang on to what you've got, and spread the word. A little confrontational, and a wee bit creepy-crawly for some, but it still requires you to think, plan and act with accuracy. Its downfall is its predictable nature.

73% ***Amiga Format*** 36

7 Millennium 2.2
by Ian Bird for Electric Dreams



The predecessor to ***Deuteros***, ***Millennium 2.2*** is another sci-fi god-game. Concerned with building an empire through our solar system, you begin to feel you're all-powerful. But you're not quite (or there'd be no challenge). You find you're not alone in space, and you have a battle for survival on your hands.

86% ***ST/Amiga Format*** 12

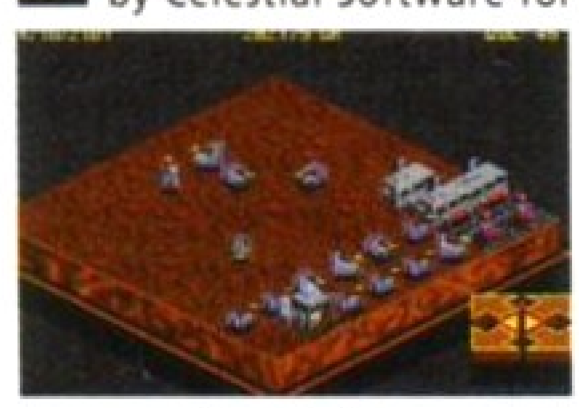
8 Populous
By Bullfrog for Electronic Arts



Not as well-polished as the sequel, but then it's slightly less difficult to master. It has an option for playing via a null-modem link, and is at its best when played this way – humans are much easier to get worked up about, although the computer is a real meanie. It's got a place in any god-game collection.

85% ***Amiga Format*** 30

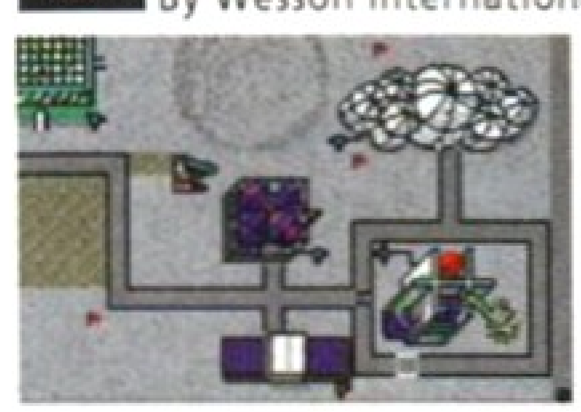
9 Utopia
by Celestial Software for Gremlin Graphics



A cross between almost all the other games! It's got ***Populous***' 3D displays, with ***Sim City***'s building, ***Civilization***'s military and domestic units, and ***Railroad Tycoon***'s financial management. To top it all, it's set on a remote planet where you have to create and support a colony, rather like ***Deuteros***. But you can't actually see your rival's city, which makes him seem a bit disembodied and reduces the appeal.

84% ***Amiga Format*** 28

10 Moonbase
By Wesson International for Mindscape



Just scrapes in by virtue of its playability and the time needed to complete it. It's got many elements from ***Sim City***: the ability to build a base from blocks, links and connections that need to be routed properly to get it working, and a population to increase and control. It's not gold dust, but moon dust is pretty valuable.

Not reviewed.

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writing them. If I couldn't program and play games at that time, I would play a few games, once in a while. I occasionally go back and play *Covert Action* which I still like to play for its own sake. I prefer to write and develop at the same time, because I get the most fun doing that. This is probably because when you're playing an old game, or someone else's game, you can't change something if you don't like the way it works. That can be a bit frustrating, so I tend to avoid it."

AF In all the recent MicroProse manuals, wherever you're mentioned, there's usually a reference to a guy called Bruce Shelley. What part did he play in the *Civilization* project?

Sid Meier: "Bruce does the things that I don't like or want to do: things like spelling, checking facts, digging up the research material and so on. He's heavily involved in the brainstorming of the original ideas and chips in a wealth of new material, some of which gets implemented, some of which doesn't. He's good at taking incomplete ideas and seeing past them – not getting caught up in the fact that 'that bit isn't working, or this bit's missing'. He can visualise the end result that we're working towards, and criticise the project in that context. He also writes the manual and does huge amounts of playtesting. I do all of the piecing together and the programming – Bruce does all the research and fact-gathering, the real work!"

AF In your opinion, what makes a good strategy game?

Sid Meier: "I like to give people decisions to make – the kind of decisions that you might change your response to the next time around, just to see what happens. For example, you might make an alliance in one game, and then try an attack, just to find out what it's like.

"Another factor I like to find in a game is accessibility – it's got to be centred on something that people might already know something about. If you have some knowledge about it, you'll think you know as much (if not more) than the manual.

"We're very much games-players here at MicroProse, so I write the kind of games that I want to play which aren't already out there. While I'm developing my games, around half the time is spent just playing them. This is, for me, the most interesting and important part of the whole process."

AF Finally, what are your all-time favourite computer strategy games?

Sid Meier:
1 *Sim City*
2 *Empire* (PC only, I'm afraid)
3 Any of the SSG strategy war-games – They're all a bit old, but I still like them.
4 *Wing Commander* – It's not strictly a strategy game, but it's an accomplishment.
5 *Civilization*
6 *Railroad Tycoon*
7 *Sim Earth* – but there's too much watching and not enough involvement for me, really.
8, 9 and 10? No way – that's all folks..."



At each of your city information screens you can view a close-up of the actual buildings and monumnets within your city boundaries. As new buildings are created, they appear on screen here, slotting between the existing structures. After nearly 6,000 years, Byzantium (which we nicked off the Romans a few years ago) is a flourishing conurbation.

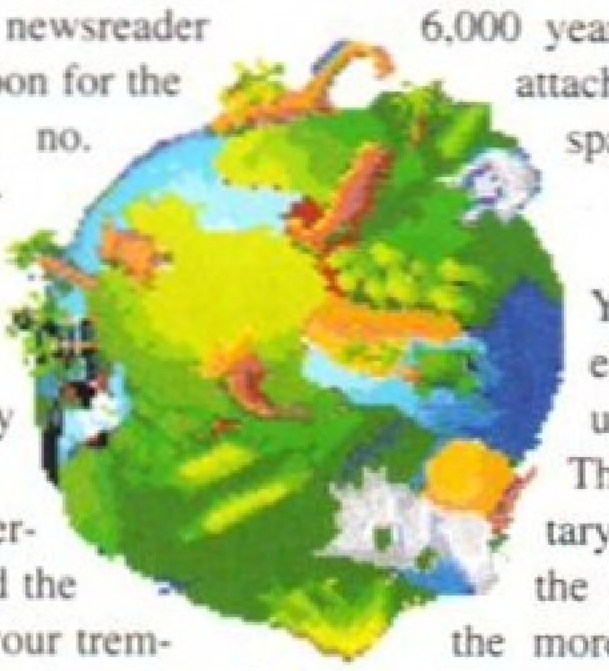
So you wanna know what a *real* epic is like? Well then forget the game of that name, and instead check out Ben Hur's big brother. The new way of life is *Civilization*.

Civilization





Everyone should have heard of *Civilization* by now – if you haven't, then the dark thing above your head is a stone, and you really should crawl out from under it. The *Civilization* we're talking about here isn't your 'speak BBC newsreader English, and use the correct spoon for the soup'-type civilisation. Oh no. We're talking the ultimate transcendental experience here, but spelt with that awful all-American 'zee'. *Civilization*, Sid Meier's latest strategy lifestyle-ruiner, is here.



You, as guide and father-figure to a tribe of settlers, hold the destiny of the entire world in your trembling hands. Man, you're bigger than the gods – if only because, in *Civilization*'s terms, you predate them all. Well, almost all – Sid Meier was there first, apparently.

On first glance, you could easily be fooled into thinking it's only a game, but then, it's only when you've played *Civilization* for a while that *it* starts to play *you*, rather than the other way round. Unlike Meier's *Railroad Tycoon* which let you play trains for a mere hundred years, *Civilization* goes on for around 6,000 years, and you can become very attached to your offspring in that space of time.

Each city has its own production facility, capable of building a vast range of military and domestic hardware. But everything costs resources and takes time – inefficient cities soon become a liability.



City of tiny lights

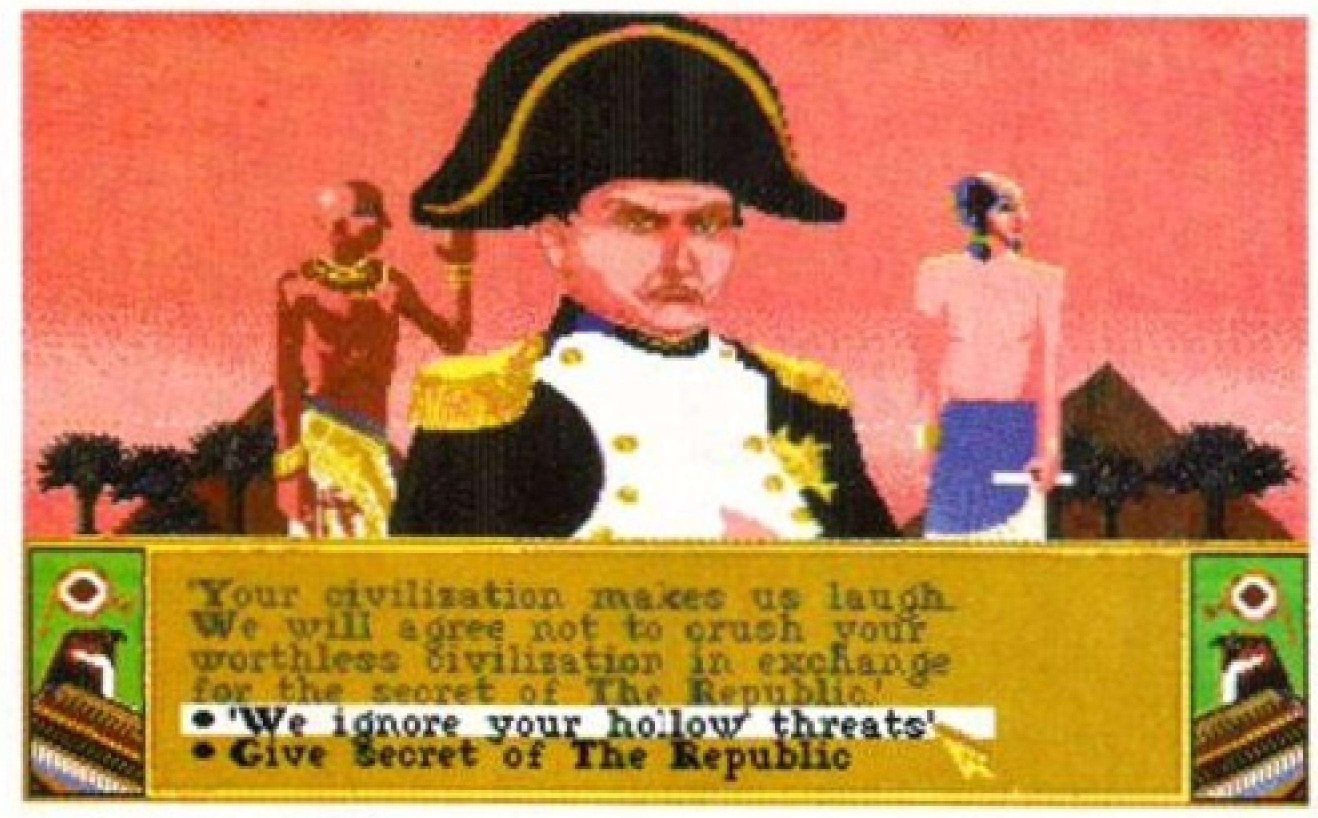
Your objectives are simple enough: start with one icon (a unit of settlers) and create a city. Then use that city to create military units to explore and conquer the world. The further they roam, the more of the world is uncovered. You'll find new places to put down roots, seas to be crossed, trade routes to open and occasionally new civilisations to be fought or bargained with. You're constantly expanding, consolidating and learning ideas. You take on the role of colonial leader, resource manager, military general, taxman, scientist, priest, entertainer and diplomat, to name just the most frequent tasks.

So much strategy is daunting at first, just like it was in *Railroad Tycoon*, but therein lies the secret of *Civilization*'s success; the more time you spend getting your head round the subtleties of *Civilization*, the more it hooks you in. It's easy enough to pick up and play, learning as you go – you'll last a long time, unless you're incredibly reckless or extremely unlucky. Soon your humble tribal beginnings start to look like they could rule the world, and then there's no putting it down. You become

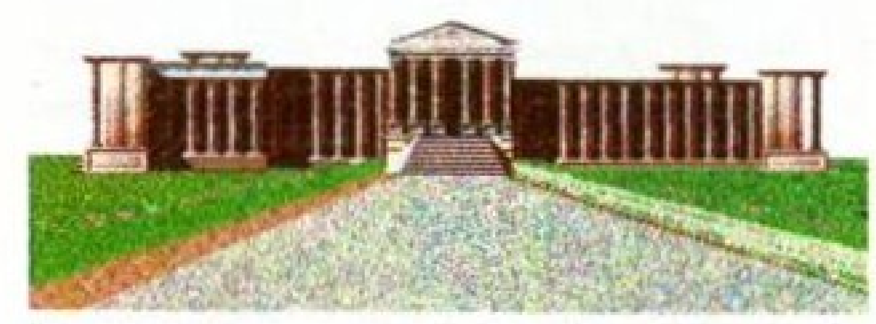
Continued overleaf



After many years, your lands will become huge, and your cities strong and sprawling. Careful use of the settlers' skills can turn desert dunes into rich, fertile soil ripe for planting precious food.



During your reign of a civilisation, you'll meet plenty of other dictators, monarchs and emperors. Many of them are belligerent, egotistical big-heads that make regular threats and demands.



Your worthiness as leader is reflected in the size of your palace. If your subjects love you, they'll offer to upgrade and rebuild it often.

obsessed with 'doing it to them better/faster/more than they're doing it to you' and before long, you're squeezing those crucial extra advantages out of *Civilization*'s surprisingly understandable rules. But mastery of the art of *Civilization* takes more than just a few games. Much like the style of *Railroad Tycoon*, *Civilization* has four levels of skill with numerous options to increase the overall difficulty. You're going to be at it for years before you really 'wear out the game'.

Let's get civilized

Civilization's sheer mass poses a few problems: greedy, but gotta-have graphics make a heavy demand on the Amiga's chip RAM, causing it to skip some of the interesting graphics which depict your progress. Amigas with only half a meg of chip RAM suffer a bit, even when running from hard drive. (As we go to press, the UK side of MicroProse is busy sending its top-ranking Amiga-programmers over to the US in an effort to cure this problem. Some early versions of the program will doubtless suffer this chip RAM headache, but MicroProse will be replacing them on request. New versions should be OK – check with your dealer when you buy). The Auto-save function prevents all this being too heart-rending, thank heavens – and even in the worst situation, all you'll miss is a few graphics – the rest of the game plays fine. A500 Plus owners should be fine, and running from floppy is possible on most machines without problems – it's a bit slow, but it works. With four disks in the pack that's a fair bit of swapping, though it by no means makes the game unplayable.

" You become obsessed with doing it to them better/faster/more than they're doing it to you "

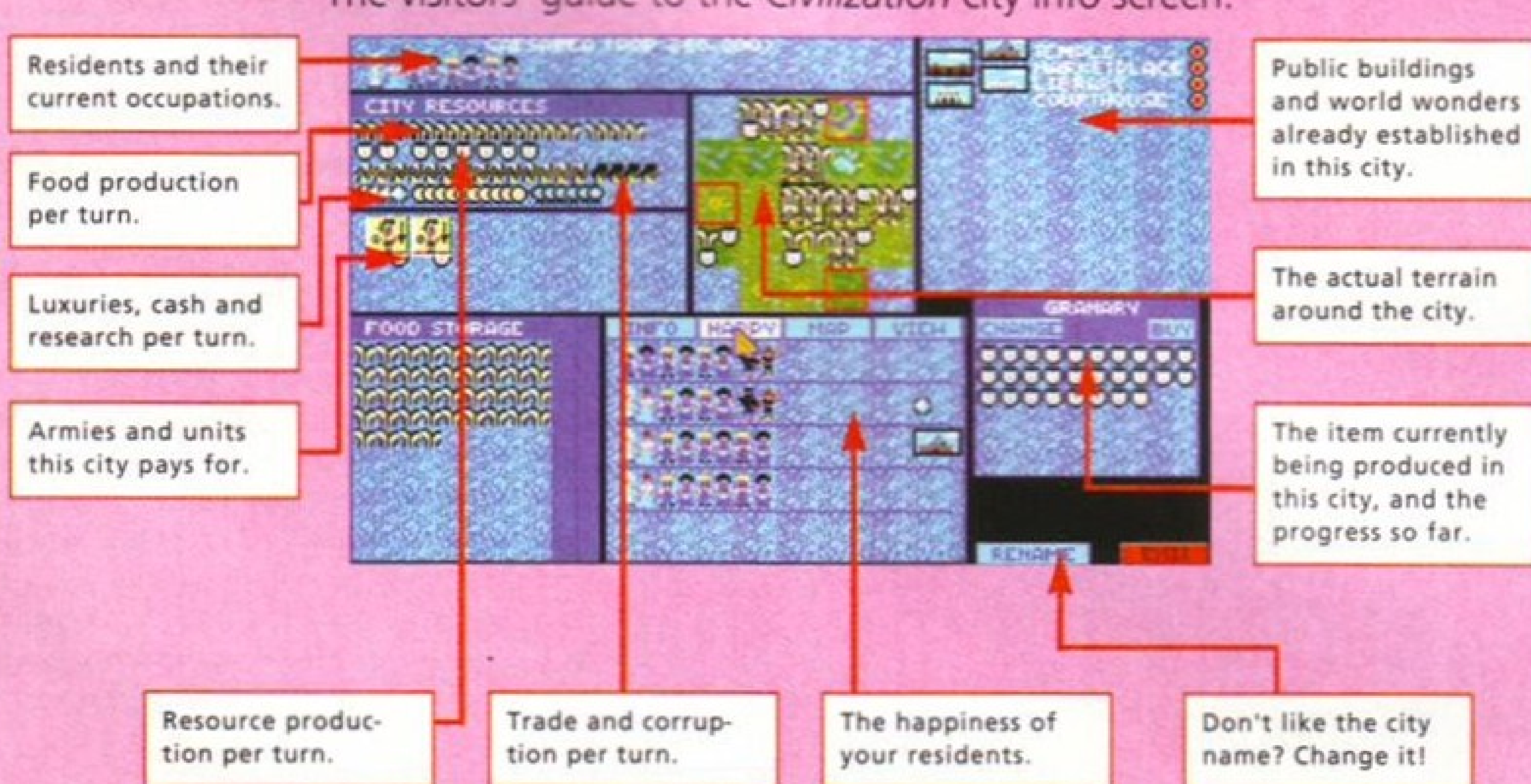
It's rather strange that something so serious-looking can in fact be so appealing; there are plenty of spreadsheet-like screens, and tough, almost corporate-level decisions to take, but it's still pure, addictive fun. *Civilization* is the kind of game that'll make your friends think you've become a recluse, or give your spouse ideas about divorce. People on the 'outside' just won't be able to see the attraction; people who've been 'Civilized' will emerge at the end of the game, bleary eyed and proud, with a knowledge of history and creation that applies as much to the real world as it does to their private one.

Meier and his team have done it again, making the war-games and god-games that have gone before look like hollow, not-quite-there experiences. Until now there's been nothing in the deep-strategy market that's ideal for beginners to play. *Civilization* is child's play to pick up, and has the kind of lastability that's so, so rare these days. But, having created the almost-perfect strategy masterpiece, there's just one problem: what on earth does Meier have to come up with next? For now, I don't care – I've got eight million people and 20 declining cities to look after!

Neil Jackson

TOURIST INFORMATION

The visitors' guide to the *Civilization* city info screen.



Civilization
MicroProse ■ £34.99

- **More sim than *Sim City*, more war than *Mega-lo-Mania*, more god than *Populous 2*.**
- **World-beating strategy that is guaranteed to change your whole lifestyle. Who needs a good night's sleep anyway?**
- **The bigger your Amiga is , then the better the game is, but small ones can play with no real problems.**
- **If *Railroad Tycoon* set your signals to green, then *Civilization* will put the whole world in your hands.**
- **Forget all the trials and trouble of the real world. Cure and control them from the safety of your Amiga.**

AMIGA FORMAT GOLD **94%**

Having a recognisable name on a game is a major step towards getting through to your market. But what happens along the way? What is it that makes a good licensed game? **Maff Evans** surveys the field of the tie –in.

What's in a name?



The movers and the shakers. A good review in ***Empire*** or ***Premiere*** magazine does not necessarily ensure the same in ***Amiga Format***.

No matter what you think of the latest film, TV or comic tie-in in the field of computer games might be, it's a safe bet that it will be snapped up by the game-buying public. Just the name will sell it. Fans of Arnold Schwarzenegger are going to be tempted by a game simply because it's entitled *The Terminator*. That's life.

But what of the game itself? Surely the producers always ensure that a game will stand up on its own merits? Well, it's not really that simple. There's a heck of a lot going on behind the scenes when a licence becomes a game…

Snapping up the titles

The first hurdle that has to be overcome is actually managing to acquire the licence for a tie-in. We spoke to Ocean (who are pretty much the biggest name in film tie-ins these days) to find out how it happens. Ocean's head, Gary Bracey, outlines the basic plan of action on the licence front.

"Basically, we monitor the trade magazines for TV, films and computers, following the big film releases to see what's available. If there is a desirable title up for grabs, then we approach the companies involved to see what deal can be arranged."

Things aren't always as simple as this however, owing to the complex legal wrangles that are involved with some titles. "*Hook* was rather complicated," says Gary, "since the game tie-in was licensed to Sony, who also own the film company. So we had to sub-licence the title from them for a number of formats in Europe."

What about the cost involved? Is it all big-dollar deals with the film companies? Does it affect the amount of development money being ploughed into the actual game?

"Well, it depends on the title being licensed. We can't really disclose the actual figures, but we'd obviously pay more for something like *Batman* rather than *Nightbreed*, just because of the strength of the original title. As far as development costs, we tend to do things in-house, which means that we can spend as much as we want on development – within limits, of course!"

The amount of cash injected into a tie-in is often a bone of contention, but in most cases the development budgets for a game depend more on the details of the licence rather than the cost of acquiring a title. Gary explains:

" If we mess up a conversion the film companies are entitled to go elsewhere for the sequel "

"The amount of money used in development of a licensed title depends on how many formats we can produce. If we buy a big title and get the rights to produce it across disk, console and 8-bit machines, we'll obviously spend more money developing for all the titles, simply because it's worth our while to capture all the markets. We'd spend less on development if, say, we only had the disk rights and not consoles, even if the licence itself was relatively inexpensive."

Some licences and tie-ins come about via a more indirect route. One licensed title that Ocean have recently released is *Push-Over*, which features the Quavers cartoon character, Curly Colin. This was more an exercise in marketing, as Ocean's PR person, Ken Lockley, explains.

"We were actually doing *Push-Over* anyway and we'd already seen Smiths have a lot of success with a licence on the Gameboy, so when we saw that they wanted to produce an Amiga game featuring Curly Colin, we decided to approach them, since we thought *Push-Over* could be easily converted to incorporate the character."

The film of the game

Another game which was produced in a rather strange fashion was *Robocop 3*, mainly because the film hasn't yet appeared! Gary Bracey explains:

"The game is actually based on the script of the third film, but Orion pictures were in trouble so the film has taken longer to produce than expected, hence the game coming out



first." It looks as though this problem may reoccur, since Ocean have managed to snap up the rights for another big future film release in the form of Steven Spielberg's next epic *Jurassic Park*. The film has been delayed quite considerably and may be threatened by the release of Roger Corman's *Carnosaur*, which apparently has a similar premise to *Jurassic Park*! However, the major film money is still behind Spielberg's movie (Walt Disney are reportedly building a dinosaur park for the filming), so the film and game should attract a lot of attention.



Gary Bracey: head of Ocean Software, one of the biggest names in computer game film licences in Britain.

Ocean have also produced two games based on the first *Robocop* films, but does this mean that they can then automatically produce the sequels?

"Not necessarily," says Gary, "ethically, if we produce a successful game based on a movie, then we get first refusal on a licence for the sequels, but the film companies are entitled to go elsewhere if we mess up a conversion, so it's not a foregone conclusion that we'll produce a game."

So software houses do have something to try to urge them into making the most of a licence, since the film companies will hold it against them! This has been the case with some titles, even some of the bigger licences. One of the most notable cases where a sequel was released by another company was *Predator*. Activision's game wasn't really up to scratch, so the sequel licence was picked up by Mirrorsoft. Just think, next time you see a film tie-in that doesn't impress you – you may be annoyed, but console yourself by remembering that the software house responsible will almost certainly not be releasing any sequels!

10 Box-office smashes

1 Robocop 3
Ocean ■ £39.95



Digital Image Design take a rather different view of the film-licence world by producing a very involved 3D adventure. Combining driving, flying, puzzle and shoot-em-up elements with their impressive polygon graphic system, DID manage to come up with a film tie-in which actually captures the feel of the movie – something which is usually missed in titles converted to the computer game screen.

91% ***Amiga Format*** 32

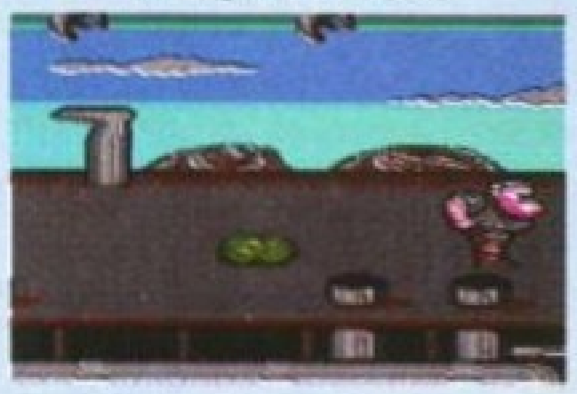
2 Batman – The Movie
Ocean ■ £24.99



Ocean have already produced one Amiga game based on the caped crusader, with a considerable amount of success. Could a game based on the Tim Burton movie come up to the same high standards? Well, yes as it happens, it did! Based on a combination of 3D driving and platform-and-ladders sections, the Gothic atmosphere of the film was transferred perfectly to the computer screen.

90% ***Amiga Format*** 5

=3 Monty Python
Virgin ■ £19.99



How the hell do you produce a game that is based on something as totally mad and surreal as ***Monty Python***? You produce a mad game, that's how. Virgin's conversion of ***Monty Python*** is about as mad as they come, with Gumby flitting about (both as himself and as a fish) collecting tins of Spam to reclaim his missing four brain pieces. Superbly playable and wonderfully stupid!

88% ***Amiga Format*** 15

=3 Flight of the Intruder
Mirrorsoft ■ £34.99



Based on the book that became the film, ***Flight of the Intruder*** is basically a ***Falcon***-style flight simulator based on the Vietnam scenarios found in the original story. The game is very technical, offering loads of options (including a head-to-head competition on two linked machines) and some very nice flying animation. The only thing that holds the game off the Format Gold slot is the fact that it is limited by the storyline. However, it's still a worthy flight sim.

88% ***Amiga Format*** 28

5 Blues Brothers
Titus ■ £25.99



Although more people are familiar with the Belushi and Ayckroyd ***Blues Brothers*** film, this game is actually a licence of the ***Saturday Night Live*** characters rather than a conversion of the movie itself. The game is a platform affair, which has some clever animation and wonderfully inventive scenery with the Brothers leaping around four levels in an attempt to collect together the items they need to put on a blues concert. Cute cartoon action which works rather well.

86% ***Amiga Format*** 29

Box-office smashes...

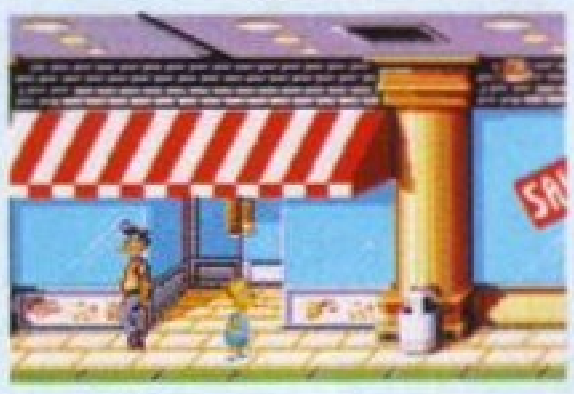
6 Knightmare
Mindscape ■ £25.99



Fans of the original *Knightmare* TV show could be a little disappointed by this game, since it doesn't really bear any relation to the programme at all! Still, it's still a very impressive *Dungeon Master*-style adventure game, put together by Tony Crowther (the author of the superb *Captive*). Despite being slickly presented, the game lacks that certain something, but should still prove fun for adventure freaks.

85% *Amiga Format* 31

=7 The Simpsons
Ocean ■ £25.99



Although *The Simpsons* cartoons are only on Sky TV in Britain, the Bart phenomenon has taken off massively. Almost every kid you see knows the phrases 'Aye Carumba!' and 'Eat my shorts,' so it's was a certainty that a video game would be released. Due to complex licensing agreements, the Amiga game is a conversion of the Nintendo cartridge. Still, it's a pretty good game (if a little simplistic at times) and should keep fans of the yellow family happy for some time.

82% *Amiga Format* 26

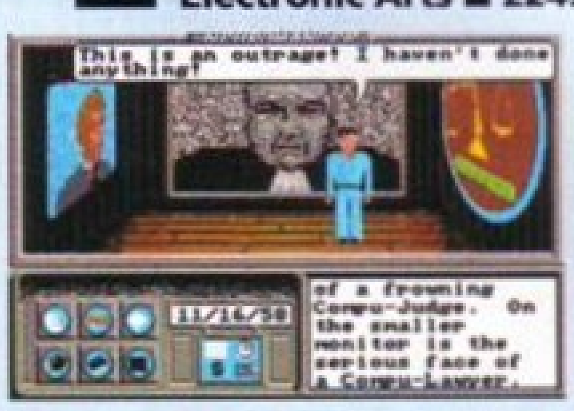
=7 Hill Street Blues
Krisalis ■ £24.99



Rather than simply producing a multi-stage arcade game based on the TV Show, Krisalis decided to produce a more technical game to capture that cops-and-robbers feel. The game puts you at the head of the police force and you control the crime stoppers via a set of icons. With all the stuff you have to remember (not least the 48 different icons), things can get a little hectic, but the game still manages to draw you into its atmosphere, making it a fun adventure in law and order.

82% *Amiga Format* 23

=9 Neuromancer
Electronic Arts ■ £24.99



The Cyberpunk sub-culture all started with one book – *Neuromancer*. Taking on the task of producing a computer game of such a historic novel is quite an undertaking, but Interplay have managed to come up with a rather challenging adventure role-player which translates the story well. The graphics don't really capture the atmosphere of the technologically overrun Chiba City, but the gameplay is challenging enough to ignore this foible.

81% *Amiga Format* 14

10 Predator 2
ImageWorks ■ £25.99



Taking on a more *Operation Wolf*-style view, ImageWorks' conversion of the second *Predator* film was a darned sight more successful than Activision's bumbling of the first film! You play Harrigan as he tries to battle the drug gangs and the nasty alien in a heat-stricken future Los Angeles. Marvellous graphics and sound effects combined with frantic action make this a worthy conversion.

81% *Amiga Format* 23



How remarkably unpleasant! Children's entertainment shouldn't have disgusting things like exploding people. It's all very well in those naughty films on the top shelf of the video shop, but in a Peter Pan story we expect nice things and a happy ending. Not this nasty stuff.



Don't just stand there like a lemon. There are some beautiful mermaids trying to help you. It's not every day that this happens, so why not make the most of it? Enjoy yourself!

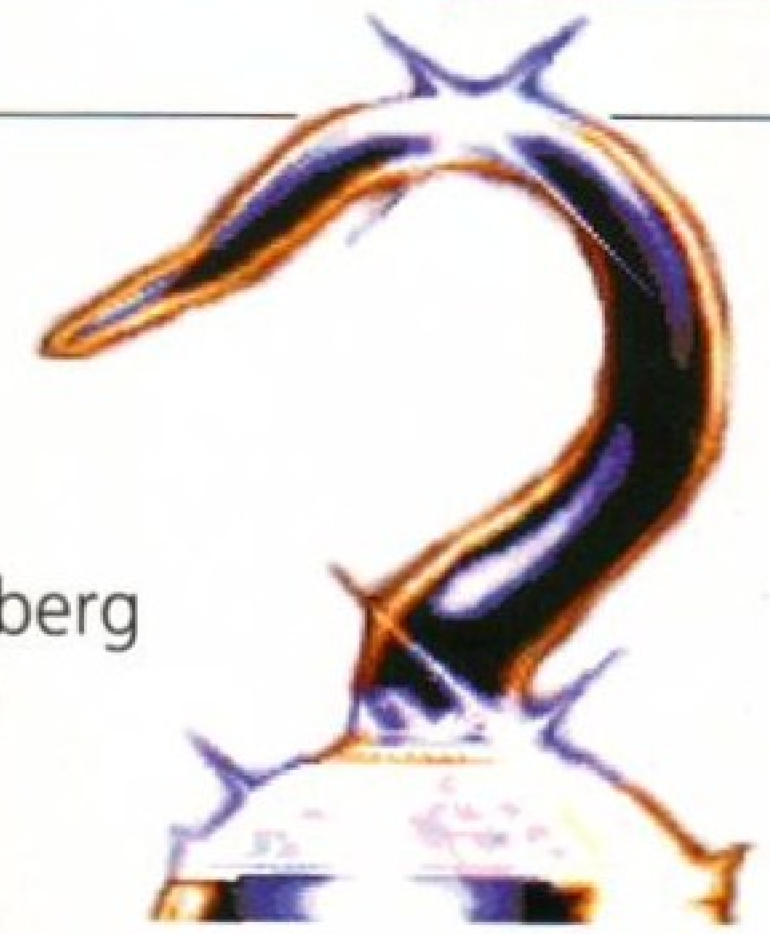
There it is! Neverland! The place of dreams. The place of fun. The place where you don't have to grow up. The place where you get trapped in a rather frustrating adventure game. Never mind.



A trip to the doctor can be a pretty hairy experience, especially if he's a maniac like Dr Chop. Grit your teeth and bear it though – there's some cash in it for you at the end!



Hook



Have Ocean managed to retain that Spielberg magic with their latest conversion, or will JM Barrie be turning in his grave?



It's quite often the case that big film releases are snapped up ready for licensing for a computer game without a shred of an idea as to what the game is going to be. This usually results in the game being a rather weak action game that is only loosely based on the characters within a film. Lucasfilm have a very different opinion. They think that the only way to do justice to a film in a computer game is to produce a graphic adventure, and Ocean have taken a leaf out of their book with the licence of the hit movie *Hook*.

You take the role of Peter Banning (who is, in fact really Peter Pan – he just doesn't know it just yet), who is taken to Neverland to try and rescue his children, who have been captured by the evil Captain James Hook. Unfortunately, Peter has completely forgotten all about his times in Neverland as the eternally youthful leader of the Lost Boys (not the blood-sucking, Kiefer Sutherland variety, but the friendly orphans). You must guide Peter around (with help from Tinkerbell), solving puzzles, finding useful objects and talking to characters before you can retrieve your children from the clutches of Hook.

Well I never!

The plot of the game is only loosely based on the film (after all, it would be a bit easy to complete if it was exactly the same), using characters and situations as clues to how you should continue, rather than enhancing the plot. Most of the situations and people you meet on the way aren't in the film at all.

The game is controlled via the usual sort of 'point and click' interface. You simply point at the command that you want to use (look at, talk to, pick up, use or give) then the person or object you want to manipulate. Walking around is even simpler. Just click on the point you wish to get to and Peter will walk there. A particularly sharp eye is needed when playing the game, since unlike most other adventures, you aren't given any hint as to the usefulness of an object. You have to 'Look At' EVERYTHING on a screen to find out whether it can be used or not – you're given no clues whatsoever! If you want a piece of advice, you can try talking to Tinkerbell to get an extra clue or two, but she doesn't often give much information away.

Interaction with the other characters is done by using the 'Talk To' icon. This gives you a set of questions you can ask (which are cycled through using the right mouse button). This is one of the main problem areas. Whereas in something like *Monkey Island* the conversations evolve as you go on, allowing the characters to develop their own part in the story, *Hook* simply churns out the same messages time after time, making everyone in the game seem a complete dullard.

One idea that is pushed forward in the Peter Pan story is to 'keep thinking happy thoughts.' Unfortunately, this is easier said than done while playing *Hook*. The graphics have been very nicely done in places (there were, after all, five artists working on the presentation) but they lack the style found in *Monkey Island 2*'s wonderful artwork.

Some kind of wonderful?

It's a shame the graphics aren't wonderful, since the presentation is all that *Hook* has in its favour. The plot hardly captures the innocent charm and fun of the original film, and the gameplay is just too boring to keep any adventurer interested for long. At times it appears that complete lunacy has taken over – especially in the way that some of the clues are given. Tinkerbell gives 'clues' to do things that have been done about 10 minutes ago!

" The plot hardly captures the innocent charm and fun of the film "

The control system is one of the most limited to appear on an adventure for quite some time. Five commands? Come on! The unwieldy control system is also very difficult to use. For example, after attempting to use an object, you have to click the icon to stop using it before you can do anything else! This is very frustrating when you're trying to carry out a series of actions.

Due to the style of game and the obvious pirate connotations, some comparisons may be levelled between *Hook* and *Monkey Island 2*. However, comparing Peter Pan's digital adventures with Guybrush Threepwood's mighty escapades is like like comparing a Gameboy to an Amiga. *Hook* lacks the scope, atmosphere, humour, style and enjoyment of *Monkey Island 2*, ending up a rather dull adventure with no real staying power.

Maff Evans

Hook
Ocean ■ £25.99

- Occasionally nice graphics, but a bit too cartoon-like for this style of game.
- The presentation is rather swish, particularly the atmospheric intro sequence.
- The control system is far too limited and unwieldy to get you involved in the plot.
- The story and characters don't seem to evolve at all, leaving everything seeming rather flat.
- A tedious graphic adventure which shrinks into insignificance next to *Monkey Island 2*.

Amiga Format Verdict **48%**

B-Movie Turkeys

1 Predator
Activision ■ £24.99



A film of suspense, violence and gripping action. *Predator* – a game with no action, bad gameplay and an Arnie with Paddington bear legs. This is not what we want from a licence. Good graphics which capture the film's spirit and exciting gameplay is what's supposed to happen!

22% *Amiga Format* 5

2 Hare Raising Havoc
Infogrames ■ £25.99



Now if there's one recent film which gives the perfect opportunity for fun cartoon action, it's *Roger Rabbit*. Instead, *Hare Raising Havoc* is a slow, *Dragon's Lair*-type game which requires loads of memory, a hard drive and the patience of a saint. Keep your sanity and avoid it.

25% *Amiga Format* 33

3 The Jetsons
Hi-Tec ■ £12.99



Another cartoon licence which fails to have any fun cartoon action is *The Jetsons*. Based on the futuristic cartoon family, the game puts you in control of George as he tries to collect objects and solve puzzles. Boring gameplay, bad controls and frustrating glitches make even the sub-13 quid price tag too much.

29% *Amiga Format* 34

4 Teenage Mutant Hero Turtles
Image Works ■ £25.99



Everyone must have heard of the Hero (nee Ninja) Turtles. The craze that swept the nation a couple of years ago was latched on to by computer-game companies, ending with a *Turtles* coin-op and computer game. The coin-op was great, but the ugly looking, poorly playing and downright horrible home-game was tedious. No wonder the craze wore off.

35% *Amiga Format* 19

5 Tintin on the Moon
Infogrames ■ £19.99



All together in big booming voice... it's... 'Herge's adventures of Tintiiiiiin!' All together in slightly less booming voice... 'What an awful platform gaaaaame!' A few levels of tedious action based on a single Tintin adventure. The tame graphics, boring gameplay and the plot stripped down to say the least.

38% *Amiga Format* 5

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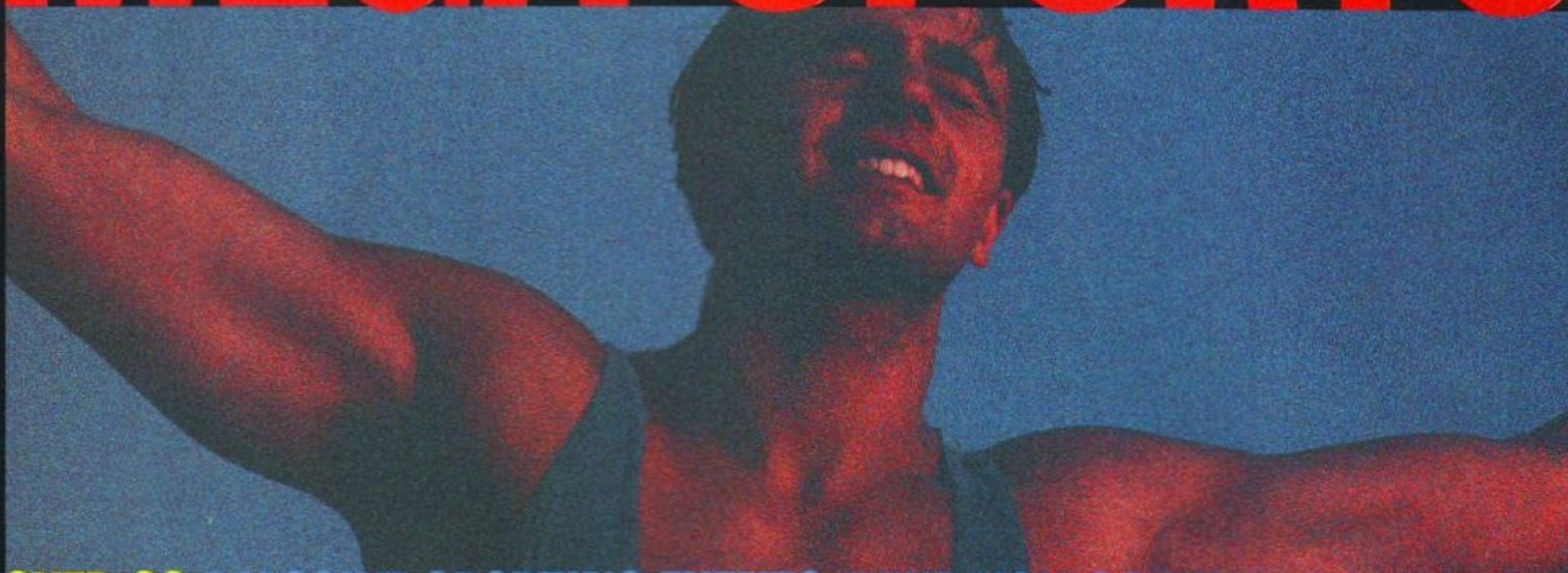
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"'Tis said if you look at it the mutant spaghetti tree will transfix you forever," says the scarecrow, his eyes desperately fighting the powerful magnetic force.



"Just like that!" Not a fez, but a comical mask that just might put the frighteners on whatever's lurking in that coffin...



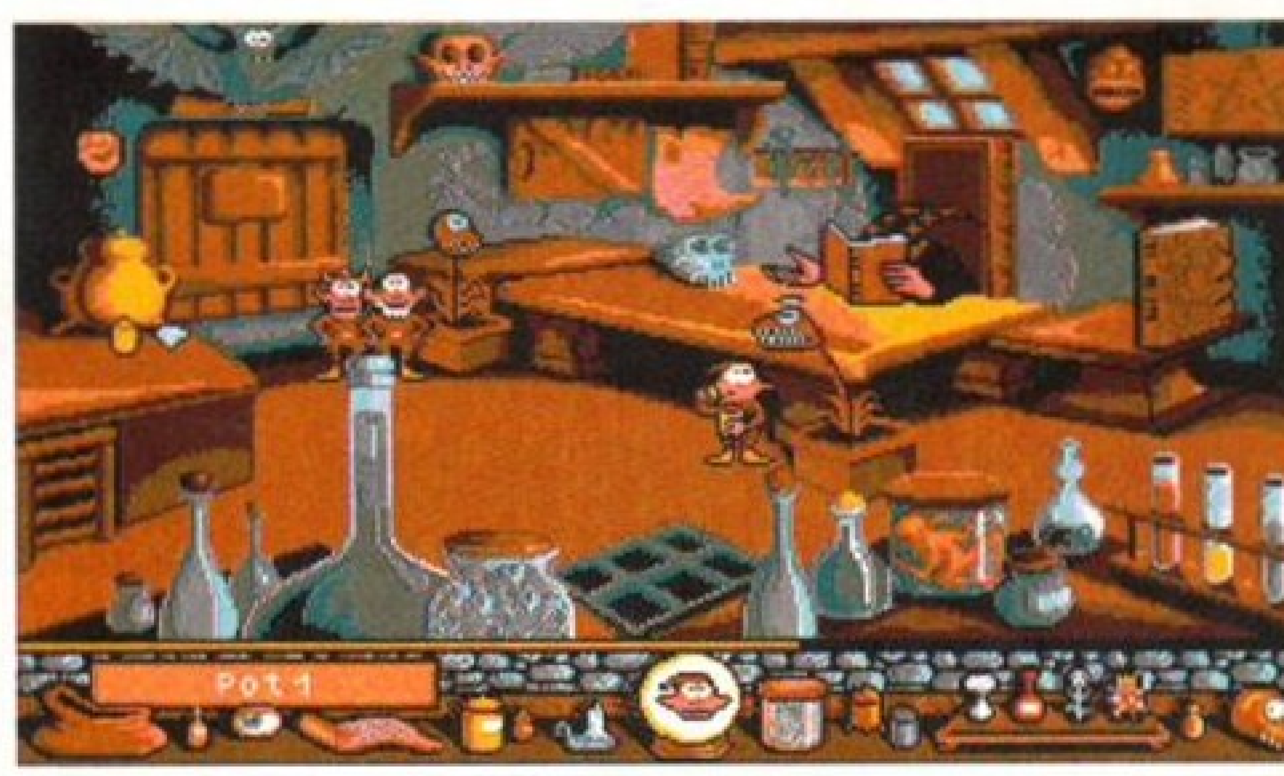
"And you needn't think I'm crossing that bridge, either. Not until someone moves that menacing-looking pillow out of my way!"

Gobliiins

The King is MAD! Long live the King ! Honestly, some of the things these regal types have to put up with are just plain ridiculous. When you're King, you expect to be able to sit down to a nice Sunday lunch without any interruptions from nasty people – you know the type – peasants, serfs, journalists and the like.

King Angoulafre is just about to tuck into his roast hog with his family, when he is attacked by an evil one armed with a voodoo doll and some pins. As the pins are stuck in, the King starts jumping up and down in his seat, and laughing like a loon. Naturally his family start thinking he's gone raving starkers, and they lock him up in one of those nice rubbery type rooms. But who can help?

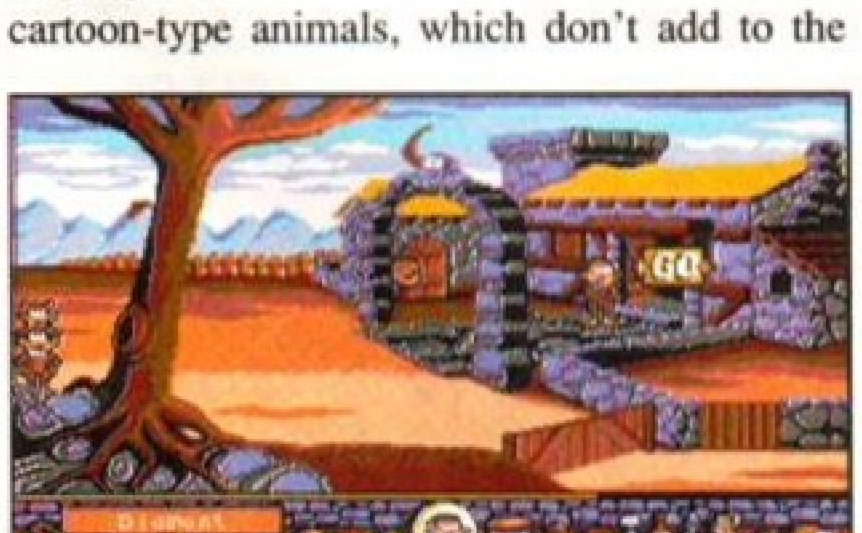
Enter Oups, Ignatius and Asgard, a trio of goblins each of whom possesses a unique talent. They must set off into unknown lands, and search out the only things which can help their King. Using the mouse, your job is to control the goblins in their quest. The area outside the Kingdom consists of a series of 22 different landscapes, each containing various puzzles which must be solved. As various objects and nasties obstruct the solution to each level, the three must operate as a team in order to move on.



"Why do I never get a fly?" The smaller of the two carnivorous plants looks on as his elder brother takes a light snack.

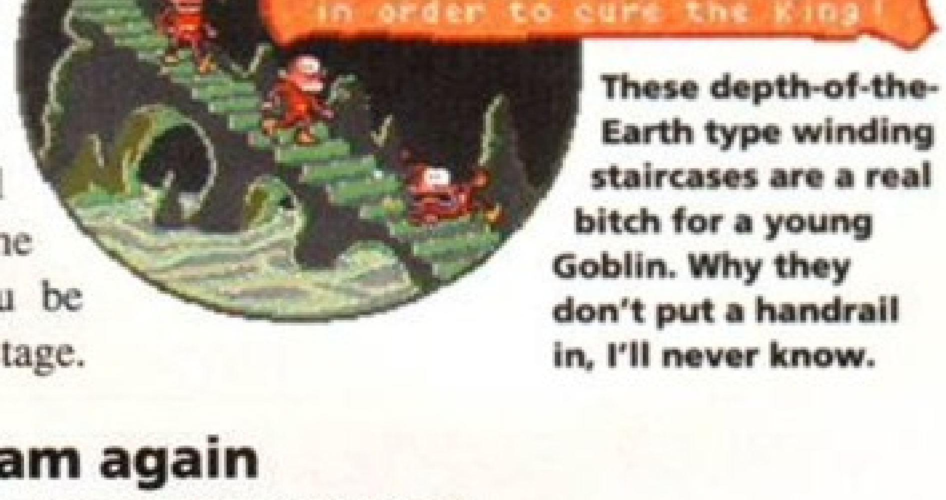
Treehouse

Once the game starts, you are effectively thrown in at the deep end. The first screen depicts a house with a back yard, a tree, and a large gate. The screen is dotted with small cartoon-type animals, which don't add to the plot but help make the game look pretty. At the base of the screen is a counter bar, which gives you information such as how much energy you have left, and which goblin is being controlled.



Don't just stand around tapping your feet, get a move on! Pass GO and you will, erm, move on to the next screen. Or something.

Moving around the screen manipulating objects in an attempt to solve the puzzle will initially end in disaster. Reading the instruction manual reveals a clue, but this doesn't really help and the game may now appear daunting to the average player. As with most puzzle-type games though, perseverance pays its rewards, and the knack of solving the puzzles soon becomes second nature. At the end of each screen a code is displayed which will enable entry to that level (with the same energy) should you be killed off at a later stage.



These depth-of-the-Earth type winding staircases are a real bitch for a young Goblin. Why they don't put a handrail in, I'll never know.

Scream again

The game comes on three disks, and the loading time is fairly rapid. The graphics are very cute from the introduction onwards, with lots of nice touches which add to the feel of the game, and a good element of humour is apparent throughout – for example attempting to use violence or cast spells on various objects during the game sometimes brings hilarious results. The sound isn't too impressive, with only two spot effects and there is no music either, but as the tunes which normally accompany this sort of game are incredibly annoying, some may find this a blessing.

The generally polished presentation is marred by a few niggles – for instance if the energy runs out, and the player chooses to restart from the current position, the entire level is reloaded from disk. This doesn't take a horrendously long time, but it is unnecessary and can be extremely frustrating.

Also there are inherent problems with the control system, since the mouse pointer is used to select and control all three characters, and this can be a bit fiddly when you are positioning a goblin in a particular spot. This latter point isn't really a criticism, but something to take into account when playing the game. The game might have been better if all characters could be moved around simultaneously.

Challenge Anneka

Gobliiins is a cute game with some excellent features, and will certainly appeal to fans of the now legendary *Lemmings* genre. Some players of the game will no doubt get very frustrated with one or two levels as the solution is not always immediately apparent, but hardened puzzlers will love it.

Andy Nuttall

Gobliiins
Coktel/Digital Integration

- Nicely presented, with cute graphics and some neat touches.
- Difficult to get into initially, but solving the problems can be rewarding.
- No time limit, so plenty of time to ponder on the puzzles.
- Some annoying delays mar what is clearly a polished program.

AMIGA FORMAT Verdict **81%**

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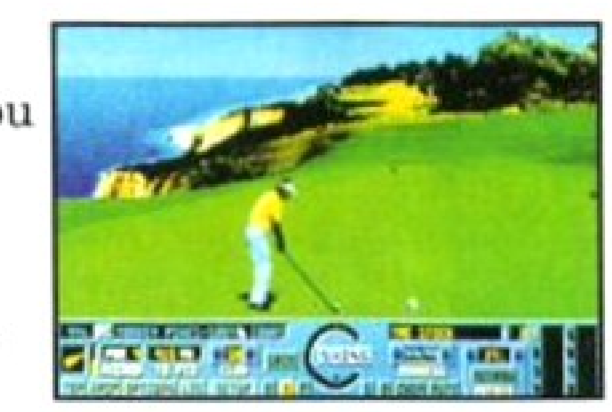
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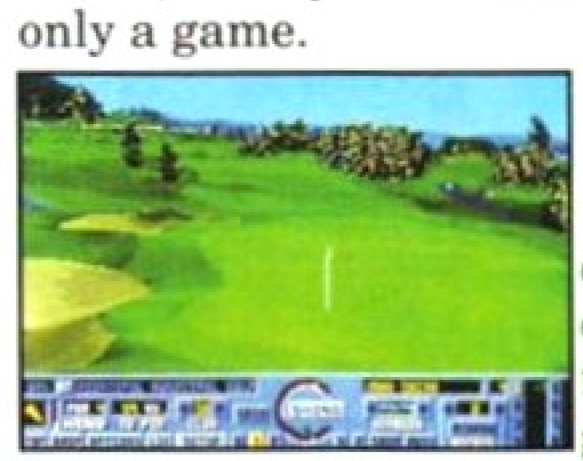
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While the shoot-em-up genre has stagnated, the equally simple-minded race-driving game goes from strength to strength. Let's burn rubber once more…

Crazy Cars III



You make think that driving games are easy – if so, sling on the brakes and just think again! Number one rule is do as much damage to the vehicle next to you as possible, so long as it's not a cop car. If you scratch the constabulary's paintwork, you'll be labelled 'offender' and hunted down.

The nice thing about race games like *Crazy Cars* is that you can sit down and play them immediately, often without even referring to a manual, because they use an age-old concept; one that is easy to relate to and understand.

We all know what to expect from a game of this genre, don't we? Push forward to accelerate, steer left and right to avoid other cars and pull back when you want to stop, right? Wrong. For, as you may well remember, *Crazy Cars II* tested your map-reading skills as well as your driving, and now *Crazy Cars III* goes into even more depth.

Take several desperate and reckless drivers with powerful cars, a perfectly innocent public-road system and some transport police, and you'll have some idea of what a typical *Crazy* race involves.

The first thing you notice when you begin driving in *Crazy Cars III* is that the game generates a good feeling of distance between you and the cars ahead. Far along the road in front of you, dwindling tail-lights of the leading cars appear and disappear quite realistically on the horizon; an effect which was not carried off as effectively in *Lotus Turbo Challenge II*.

Get it loose

Different weather conditions also have a greater bearing upon the game than in *Lotus*, with each climate producing its own car-handling characteristics as well as a change of scenery. Weather conditions are sometimes generated randomly, so it is possible to have snow falling upon the cacti as you drive along desert roads.

Different towns also have different scenery and who is to say whether or not you will race at night or in the daylight hours? A large range of scenic views is to be found within this game, each one of them well-drawn and moving past very swiftly... now I want a real Lamborghini!

Cash, as well as climate, is important. Prize money for finishing in pole position is double the race entry fee, but for finishing third you make a 50 per cent loss. So winning the race outright is practically the only way to make a profit. The only alternative is to wager other competitors in your race that you will finish before them. Unfortunately your opponents are very good – you have been warned!



There's 15 races to run, and that's just in one division out of the four. Wherever in the country you go to compete, weather is unpredictable. And remember: you need money to enter the race.

Money won at a race can be used to improve your car through the purchase of various add-ons, which is a welcome feature. The hardware store sells new and faster gearboxes, wet-weather tyres and super brakes, which are all ludicrously priced but improve your car's performance greatly. The most expensive item is, surprisingly enough, the good old nitro fuel, costing an incredible $50,000. For your hard-earned money you get 10 seconds of rocket-powered mayhem, which increases the car's speed by about a third. This has the effect of practically turning it into a low-flying

GO-FASTER GADGETS IN THE HARDWARE STORE



Well, here I am at the *Crazy Cars* equivalent of Halfords, and there are lots of juicy things on offer. The devices are as follows, starting from the top row and working from left to right: radar detector, this useful gadget tells you police are ahead, so that you can slow down to avoid their radar; turbo boosts, that's ridiculously priced nitro fuel to you and me; snow tyres, the grip these provide is crucial for icy stages; new automatic gearbox, a self-shifter that will take you up to 336kph; super-brakes, these babies give unsurpassed stopping power; new manual gearbox, this will take you up to 336kph as well — and it's $5,000 cheaper.



A little bit of fresh air between you and other cars is a rarity, so it's really welcome. Strangely, that city over there just never seems to get any closer. With the blacktop rushing past at a slightly pedestrian speed, we're not in too much danger of being clocked by a speed trap – at the moment!



Apart from the fact that it seamlessly intertwines ludicrously expensive machinery with disastrously irresponsible road sense, the main reason it's called 'Crazy' is probably the other drivers.

aircraft, so I suppose we must grudgingly accept that the race is more interesting when nitro is only used rarely.

Babylon business

It's a fair cop – even in America. Police are to be found patrolling the highways, giving you even more hassle. Apart from the patrol cars which chase you when you accidentally (or otherwise) hit someone, there are also radar-operated camera speed traps along the road.

Police wielding hand-held speed-detectors also give chase frequently. They are excruciatingly annoying, but give the game much more flavour. And, as they try to ram you off the road (because you've been, er... ramming other people off the road), the game bears a very strong resemblance to *Chase HQ* (your car even becomes labelled with a huge arrow saying 'Offender' on it). Nb: a sneaky trick to play when the cops are around is to shunt an opponent into a police car, thus turning him into an offender.

All-in-all, *Crazy Cars III* has amazing durability because it keeps on changing, the races run smoothly and quickly, and terrain is presented really well. From the word go, you have a challenge on your hands. It is certainly much harder than the recent *Lotus* and *Jaguar* race-games, but in the long run this just means that you'll carry on playing.

Paul Tyrrell

Crazy Cars III
Titus ■ £25.99

- 15 different locations in each of the four divisions, masses of varying terrain and weather make this a big game.
- Curiously, the same people appear in each division, but with differing driving ability.
- Nice intro, sound and graphics which move fluidly all the time and don't look like cardboard cut-outs.
- A two-player mode should be seriously considered for *Crazy Cars IV*.
- Errm... why is the Lamborghini on the box yellow, when the one in the game is red?

AMIGA GOLD FORMAT **93%**



Guiseppe Baloni, Italian left-back, was vastly admired for his ability to balance a huge chipboard arrow on his head while dribbling.

European Champions

iDEa ■ £25.99

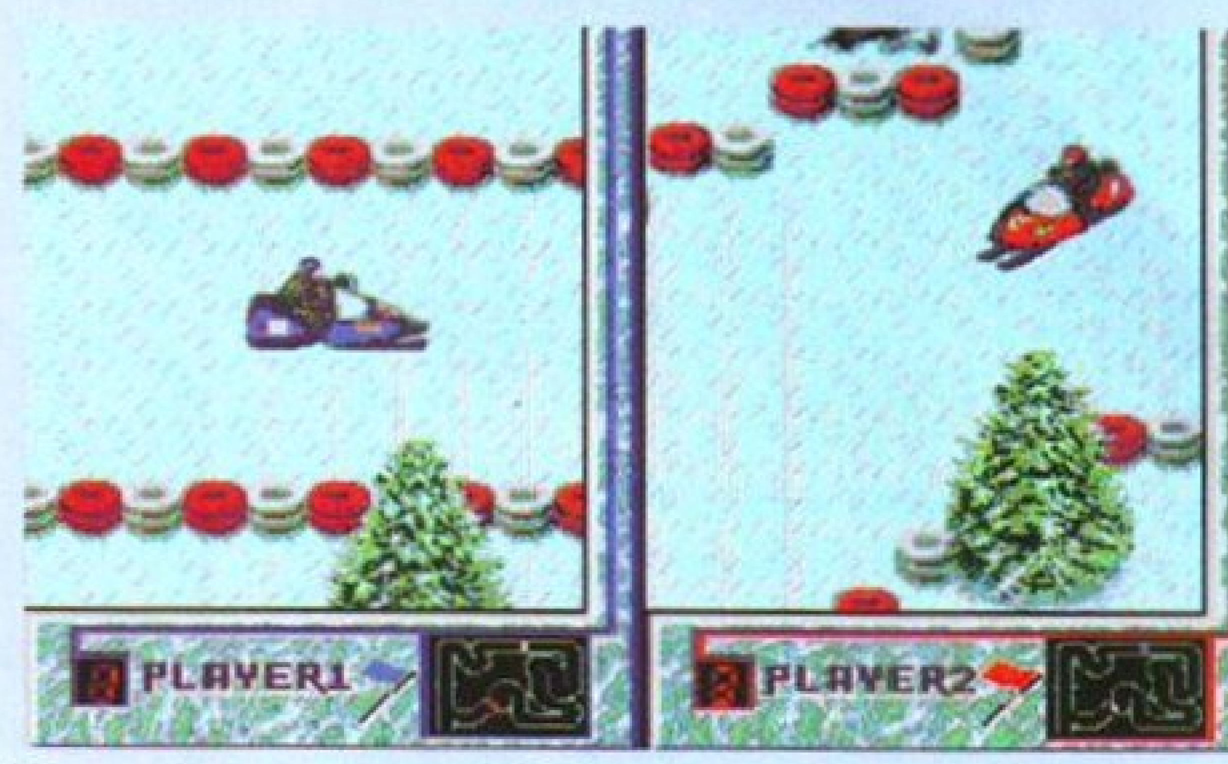
The year is 1992, and there are already far too many football games out there. So what has this one got over others? Well, it doesn't actually come with an instruction manual. Nope. Instead you get a rather tasteless poster.

The game is actually as crap as the poster, unfortunately, as it could have been good. It's one of those footy games where the ball sticks to your feet, the action is interrupted by pointless animation sequences, the ball always goes out from goal kicks. The graphics are typically green...

Sonically the game is a real blaster. I got a headache. Yup. It was a bad iDEa releasing this one...

Asam 'Top Life' Ahmad

Verdict **34%**



You can toboggan in a straight line. Or you can toboggan diagonally. What fun! Yet despite the limits, this game can be rather enjoyable.

Winter Supersports 92

Flair Software ■ £25.99

As the Summer Olympics in Barcelona end, Flair bring out a game based on winter games. This is either a bit out of date, considering the Winter Olympics were held earlier in the year, or a tad premature – the next event will be in 1996.

Aside from a poor sense of timing, as a game it's on the ball. It's based on a multiple-sports format, along the lines of Epyx's *Games* series of a few years back. There are eight events, which can be played individually or in a series, by one or two players.

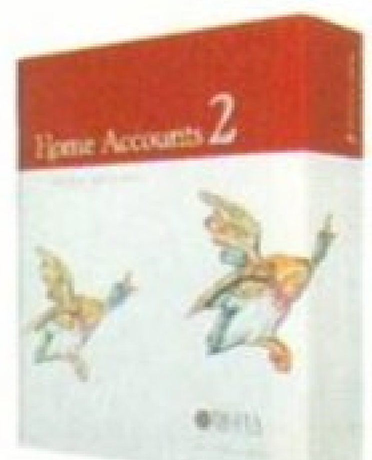
The problem is, some of the events are so similar it seems there's not much to the game. Bobsled and Luge are variations of the same event, while Downhill Skiing and Giant Slalom are both based on the familiar downward-scrolling ski course. Also, Bale Jumping and Speed Skating are based on an identical 3D course with polygon graphics, the only difference being a polygon bale which has been thrown in for good measure.

Pro Ski Challenge, a one-on-one downhill ski race with jumps, and Skidoo Racing, an average *Super Sprint*-style game, are the highlights of the package. A not very mixed bag of out-of-season sports, playable... but not for long.

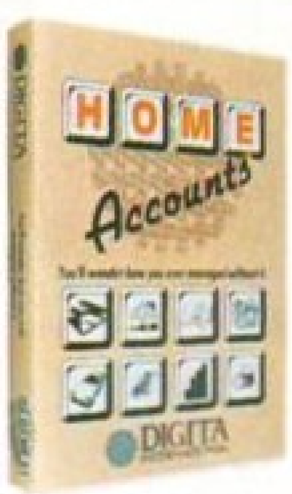
Tim Howell

Verdict **65%**

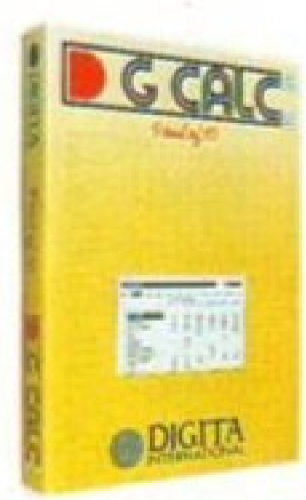
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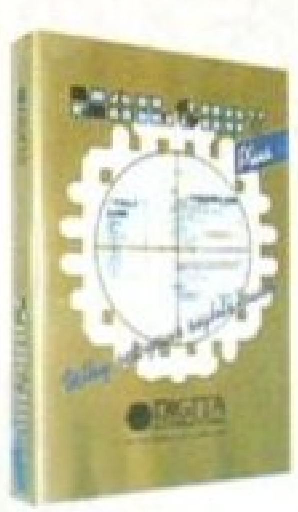
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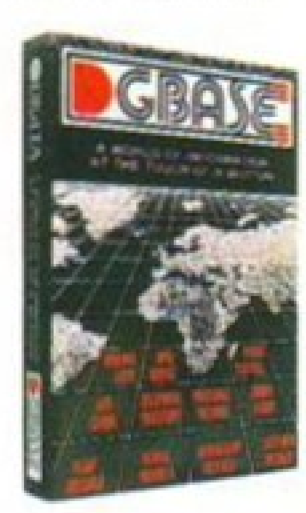
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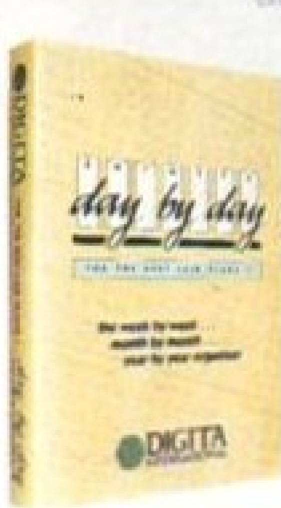
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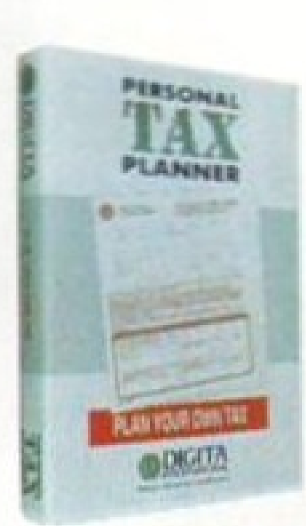
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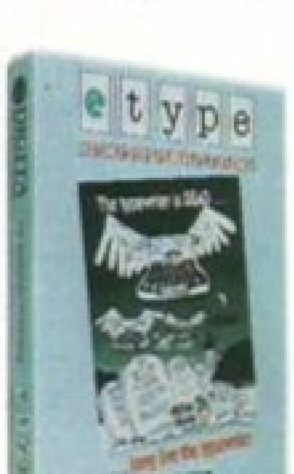
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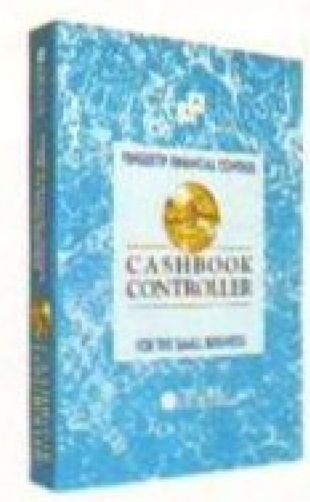


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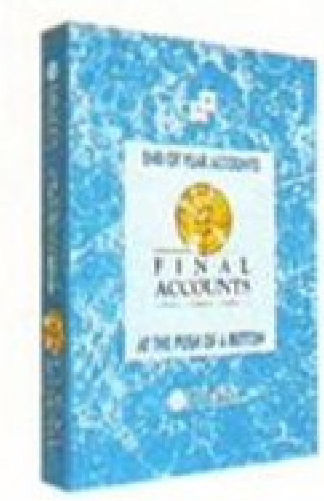


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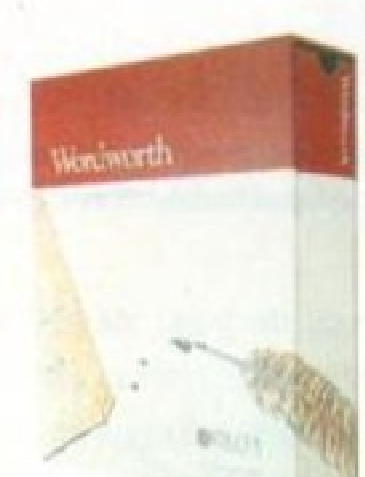


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The questions...

1 Who was the designer of the original Traveller role-playing system?

- A John S Waddington
- B Jean-Luc Pickard
- C Marc W Miller

2 In table-top role-playing terms, what is a d10?

- A A futuristic weapon
- B A ten-sided die
- C A measure of character strength

3 What does NPC stand for?

- A Non-player character
- B Non-playing creation
- C Non-personal character

4 What was the sub-title of Empire's computer game, *MegaTraveller 1*?

- A The Zilmex Confederation
- B The Zhodani Conspiracy
- C The Zehrani Conscription

5 How many planets are there to explore in the computer version of *MegaTraveller 2*?

- A 117
- B 79
- C 223

Got it?

Yep? Then send your answers to:

WANDERING SPACE-CRUSTY COMPO
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BATH, AVON BA1 2DL

The Gravity of Laws...

All entries must arrive on or before Friday 18 September 1992 to be considered for the draw.

The competition is open to everyone, except employees of Future Publishing, Empire, GDW, 20th Century Fox, Sam's Intergalactic Burger Bar, Captain Slogg's Tar Date 2077, The Borgias, Julius Caesar and Friends, Romans or Countrymen Inc., or the Illuminati.



The biggest change between *MegaTraveller 2* and *1* is how space travel is used, with a simple menu system to control positions on board ship. The view screen changes as you go, to reflect differences between planets. But disk swapping is tiresome, hard drive or twin floppy systems are recommended.

Boldly travelling where no alien has gone before, the sequel to Empire's flawed RPG sci-fi adventure has finally arrived. Forget fisticuffs and get thinking.

Imagine living 5,000 years in the future. Try to get your head around the concepts of travelling from star to star, planet to planet. Think of all this as commonplace and a huge Imperial government overseeing the situation. That's the setting for *MegaTraveller*.

These ideas are not particularly novel – the Traveller role playing game was born in the late sixties and early seventies. It has influenced many parts of the science fiction world. The mind behind it was Marc W Miller. After the lukewarm reception of the first computer version of his system (*The Zhodani Conspiracy*) the inventor was called in to help with the design of this follow up.

The Quest for the Ancients takes a lot of its background details and plots from very early Traveller books. These have been enjoyed many times by pen and paper Travellers, and so were thoroughly play-tested for the computer version.

Hundreds of thousands of years ago, an exotic race called the Ancients flourished for a very short time. They did lots of amazing things: like build starships, transport aliens (including humans) around the galaxy, move planets and suns around, and had a technology so advanced that even 5,000 years from now, people cannot fully fathom it.

Then, for reasons unknown, they left. Did a runner, blew town – they vanished. They left a lot of artifacts and ruins for archaeologists to ponder over. It's at one such site that the game begins. For no apparent reason, one of the Ancient machines begins to work, producing a corrosive slime. And it doesn't stop.

The planet where it all begins (Rhylanor) is doomed within seven years unless your party can find a means of turning off the machine. Of course, a reward commensurate with saving a planet is offered – but you aren't in it for the money, are you?

Play the role

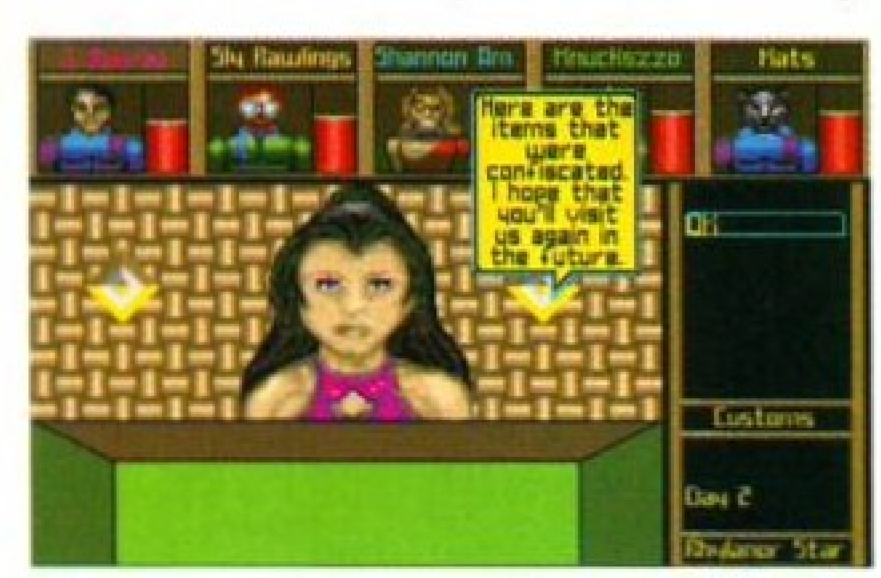
RPGs are about assuming the identity and viewpoint of an individual, and making decisions from their viewpoint. They usually have little to do with rocket-propelled grenades. Step one is to invent a group or 'party' of such individuals. *MT2* lets you play with a party of up to five characters. There are some ready-made, but it's more fun to make your own.

The first decision is the race of your character. As well as humans, evolved canines can also be selected – Vargr characters. Human Imperials refer to Vargr as "doggies" for obvious reasons, but Vargr have certain advantages. Gender is determined next.

After that comes the important question of statistics – how strong, dextrous, enduring,



A group of intrepid adventurers loaf on the street waiting for someone to talk to.



Star port security is very tight – but all illegal weaponry is returned when you leave a world.

INDIVIDUAL PLAYER CHARACTERS: HOW *MEGATRAVELLER 2* MEASURES PEOPLE

This game uses a simple screen to show the skills and life story of the individuals you play with. So easy!

This shows the former career of a character (Vargr can have more than one) and name of the character.

The race and sex of the character appear here. Hits is a measure of how tough they are. Financial status matters; retired characters get an annual pension to boost this.

The vital statistics! These vary from zero to 15 – the higher they are the better. Physical statistics go down with age.



Skills are used to measure success or failure at tasks in the game. As a retired doctor, she has impressive skills at Medical – but her combat skills are very limited. Streetwise is used to communicate with persons of low social status (criminals). Dr Shannon Amore has been around!

This character has very little in the way of goods and chattels. Her sub-machine gun has been confiscated at the star port (Stealth skill helps to conceal weapons) but at least she has a low passage space ticket in case she needs to get off the planet quickly.

MegaTraveller 2

intelligent, knowledgeable and affluent a character starts out. It is very easy to keep 'rolling the dice' until a decent set of statistics shows up. A character has to start at age 18, and progress through a pre-game career before being able to adventure.

These pre-game careers vary from being an ex-member of the armed services, a professional (bureaucrat, diplomat, doctor and so on), a criminal (common rogue or space-going pirate), a law enforcer, or for those who like fantasy role playing – a barbarian, ignorant of high technology. Each class has its uses, and a good mixture is important to success.

Daunting at first glance, the character generation is quite simple to work through with a mouse – and it will produce as good a variation in characters as the real RPG. You also get a good, atmospheric piece of music too. All of the *MegaTraveller* rules are in there, including the Advanced Character generation (overly detailed – definitely not recommended except on wet Sunday afternoons).

Save the planet

You can play nearly the whole game with a mouse. To move, point at where you want to go – and the characters walk there. A nice touch is that they don't stay in a rigid group, but tag along in a random, realistic fashion. Some of the common functions are mapped onto keys. This saves time when you get used to the game.

The main viewpoint is sited directly above the characters. Most of the action takes place in settlements, although the occasional excursion to an Ancient site is necessary too. This view can be zoomed out, which is handy when trying to spot people you have to meet – 'Non Player Characters' or NPCs for short.

Success is achieved by meeting the right people with the right objects in your possession. Included in the box is a clue book, which details the full plot, all minor plots, all objects and all NPCs. This sort of thing costs a few quid more in the average role-playing game – but not with this one!

" Even when you have completed the game, there's a lot a detail that you will have missed "

Space travel is handled entirely through menus. Reference to the star charts in the manual is heavily recommended – but once you know where you are going, getting from A to B is a doddle. If your characters didn't have a ship to start with, no problem – there are space tickets available in most cities.

What makes this game so much better than the original is the scale – the original coped with around a dozen star systems, *MT2* has 117. This means that it's no longer a hop, skip and jump to get to where you want – your route to save Rhylanor has to be carefully planned in advance.

Seven years to save a planet may sound like a long time, but every jump from one planet to another takes a week. Even when you have completed the game, there's still a lot of detail that you will have missed – which makes playing it more than once much more fun than it was with the original.

My complaints are minor – some of the text messages don't get erased (which means that further messages are corrupted) and the point and click system can leave you jammed in a corner sometimes. Neither of these are major problems, and did not stop me from enjoying the game.

The sound effects are sparse, as are the opportunities for combat – but role-playing is about solving problems with brains, not with brawn. There is some fighting to be done (and some of the futuristic technology is awesome), but violence plays second fiddle in *MegaTraveller 2*. Recommended!

Pat McDonald



Interaction with NPCs is very simple, with few choices to make. This is how you make progress.



Space combat is very simple – target the enemy and keep clicking on fire. You usually win.





MegaTraveller 2
Empire ■ £29.99

- Large, detailed playing area.
- Simple yet comprehensive controls – it is usually obvious what you need to click on.
- Plot is enjoyable and different – no dungeons to wander in this game!
- Rewarding if you are patient.
- Clumsy interface, with rather poor overhead graphics and some minor bugs.

Amiga Format Verdict **82%**

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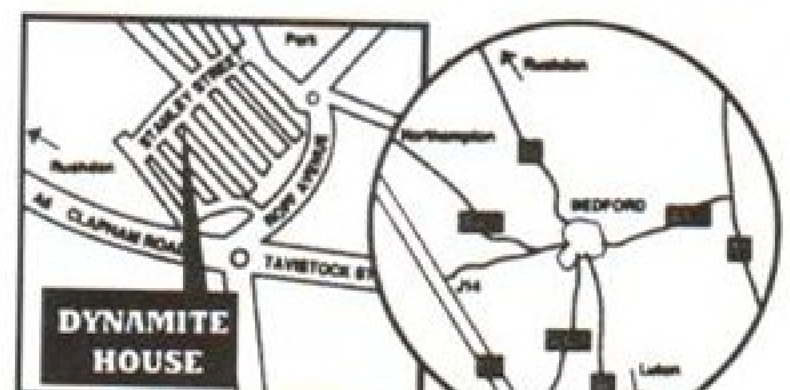
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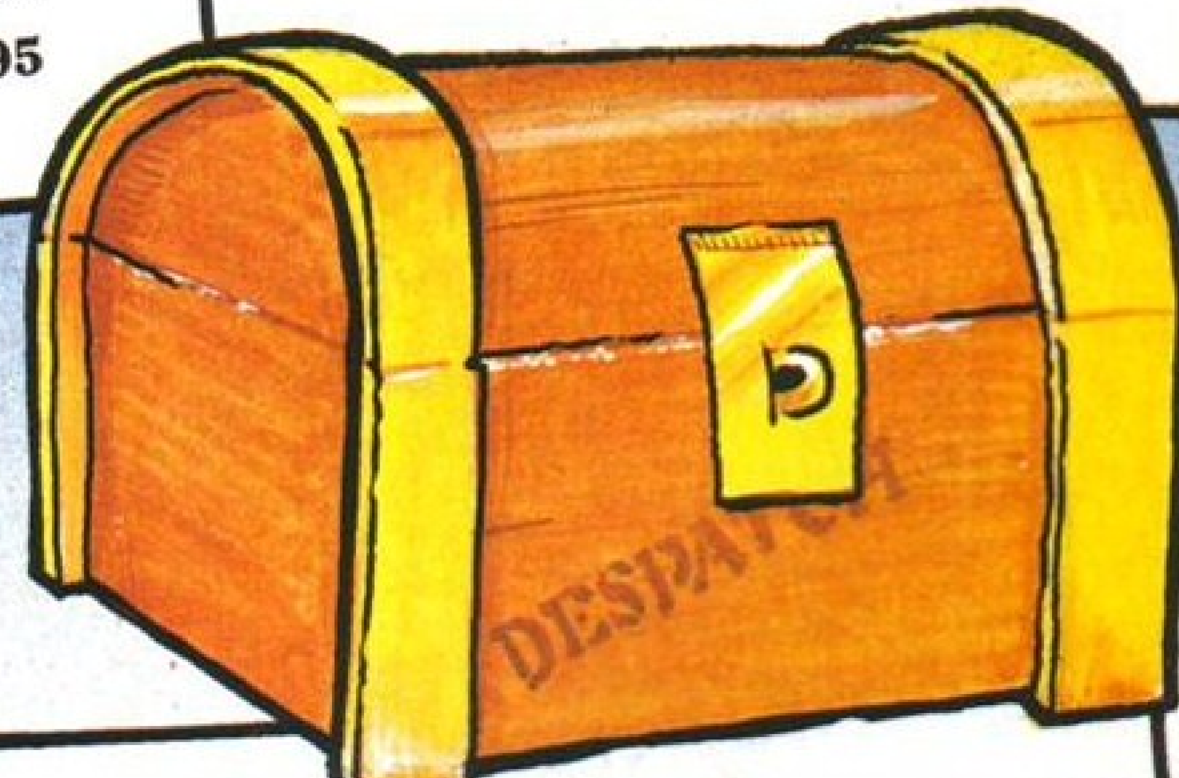
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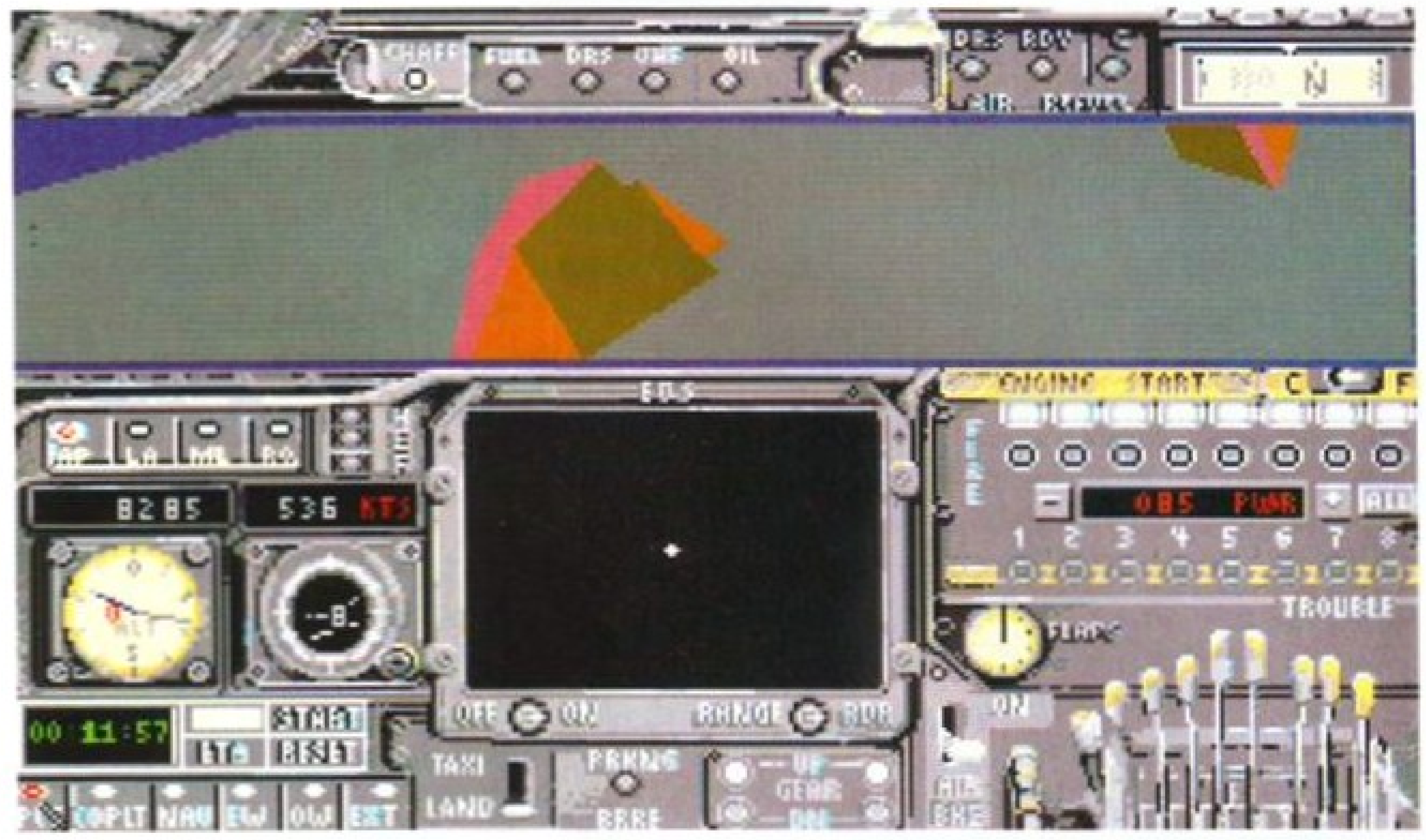
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NEXT ISSUE:

ypse, as AMIGA POWER gets into the groove with the nation's top chart and discover just how the latest games rate, in the September issue of sale Thursday 20th August.

Take one outdated, massive American eight-engined bomber. Add a pinch of trendy stealth technology and stir in the melting pot of modern combat.



The Terrain Following Radar, linked to the autopilot, will actually avoid hills and other obstacles. But it's more fun to take the B-52 down low and fly it yourself.

Megafortress

Everybody must have heard of the B-52 bomber. I mean, they were used in Vietnam, they were used in the Gulf, they've even had a band named after them. Not bad going for a big, ugly, out-of-date strategic bomber.

The B-52 Stratofortress (as it's properly known) has had a hard time of late. What with all these new-fangled supersonic stealth aircraft, nobody seems to want a lumbering eight-engined bomber with the radar signature double that of an Italian opera-singer. Scrapheap here we come.

But perhaps not. A chap called Dale Brown, who apparently used to navigate with the USAF on these babies, wrote a book in 1987 about a B-52 which was modified at Dreamland, the secret aeronautical works deep within Nellis Airforce Base. The plane was given all the stealth characteristics so in vogue at the moment. He called it the Megafortress.

And here's the game of the book. What you've got is a completely black plane that flies almost exclusively at night, with no lights on, and tries to avoid everything it picks up on radar. So you can forget your *G-LOC* dogfighting skills – it's time to get defensive.

Rock lobster

First you must learn to fly the beast. This means sussing out not one but five vital on-board stations, one for each crew-member. If it sounds complicated, that's because it is. For example, if you want to get the thing off the ground (and it is desirable for most of the missions), you must flick loads of switches in the commander's position, then swap to the co-pilot's seat to flip some more, then swap back.





To operate the switches and levers, you must use the mouse. Click on each button and the computer switches it to whatever it wasn't switched to before. Once you get used to this, you can actually fly round most of the panels, clicking away and getting the flight systems running with surprising rapidity. But it does take a while to get used to it.

As well as the two actual pilots, there's a navigation station, an offensive-weapons console, and an electronic warfare operator (see panel). You'll need to be familiar with each if you're going to get anything done. There are three theatres you can operate the Megafortress in. Red Flag in Nevada is a training area, which gives you some mock-up baddies for you to avoid, as well as bombing ranges, air-to-air refuelling points and missile bases to hide from.

Then there's the Gulf. Yes, it's time to go up against Iraq once more, as you fly much the same sort of missions. This time, though, the enemy is real. They're angry, they're numerous and they don't like huge black planes flying over their territory.

If that doesn't pucker you enough, then there's always 'The Flight of the Old Dog'. Taken directly from Dale Brown's book, this sees you belting across Kamchatka in an

THE DREAM TEAM

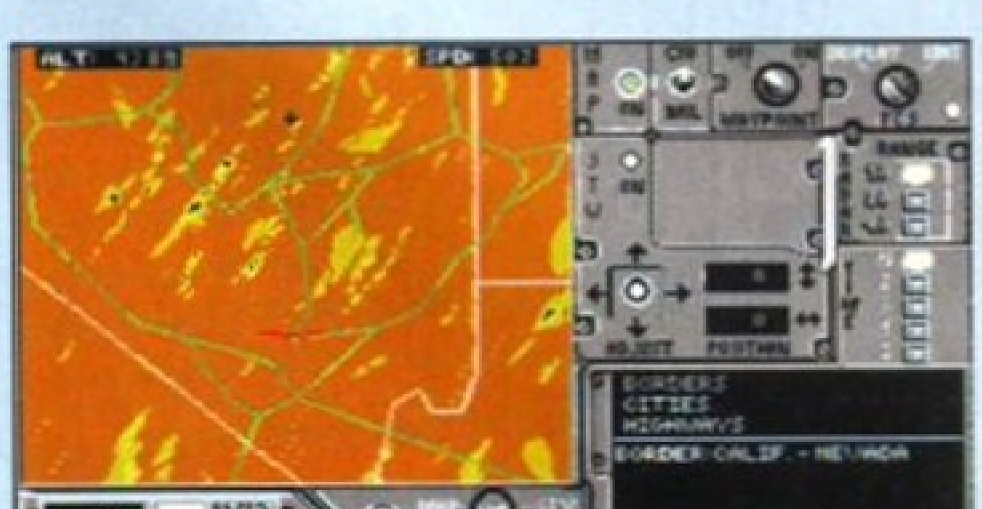
It's tough enough playing the part of one modern jet pilot, but in *Megafortress* you have to become five highly skilled airmen at once. Although this means concentrating on the manual, it does make the game more varied. But the question is, do you get their combined salaries (plus danger money) at the end of every combat mission?



The Commander's view. This is where you do the real 'flying' from. Taking off, landing and evasive manoeuvres need outside views, so you'll have to be at this station to carry any of these out.



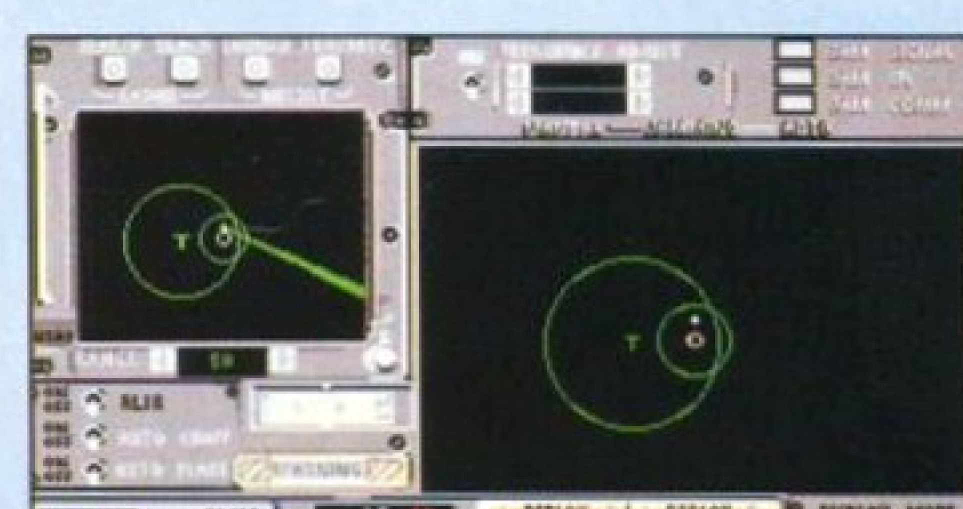
This is the Co-pilot's view. Here you'll find most of the non-essential controls. Electrics, lights, radios and all that type of nonsense are all controlled from the co-pilot's station.



The Navigator's view. Loads of maps, obviously. But as well as maps, there's a large dollop of radar equipment, distance measuring gear and other useful tracking devices to get you home.



The Offensive Weapons Officer's view. Search radar, guidance cameras, missiles, bombs, the lot. You name it, this guy can destroy it. They're all here: free-fall bombs, guided air-to-surface missiles and air-to-air.



The Electronic Warfare Officer's view. He's first to know when anything's aiming at the Megafortress. He'll jam it, confuse it, chaff it and, when all that's failed, he'll pray at any deities he believes in.



Taking the Megafortress through the mountains is one way of guaranteeing secrecy. But you've got to be confident that taking a massive bomber through a small gap at high speed is actually a viable proposition first.

effort to knock out a special laser developed by the USSR for use against good, honest Americans everywhere.

You have to beat the best Soviet equipment both on the ground and in the air during this mission, and, seeing as you're the only idiot that is stupid enough to actually try this sort of a caper, you've got no support from any of the other US forces. It's a big mission, and it's packed with nerve-shredding tension almost from start to finish.

“ The game has a nice tactical edge, and when you fend off an attack it's very satisfying ”

How this game differs from many flight sims is its time-scale is more realistic. This means each mission takes a while (about half-an-hour or more) and for much of the time you're sitting waiting for the action to start as you drone across the night-time landscape on autopilot at about 200 feet. But if you're having a go at the Old Dog mission, the tension really gets to you as the minutes tick past.

Megafortress is reminiscent of *Birds Of Prey* in that it's not a climb-in-and-fly sim. You do have to know the manual, and there are those five stations to master (see The Dream Team box). But the control-panel, switch-clicking business works better than you'd think, and it's fairly forgiving when you're in a hurry.

The game is let down by the long disk-accessing pauses as you switch from station to station. The actual update rate isn't quite fast enough, either. Also, you only get to fly the Megafortress at night. This makes sense plot-wise, but it limits the gorgeousness of the outside views somewhat. It's a pity because there would otherwise be some great external views. What you actually end up with is a black angular shape whizzing over a load of dark grey shapes on the ground.

Love shack

Because it's a hulking great bomber, the combat action in Megafortress is far removed from the usual manic panic. Instead of climbing, diving, weaving and generally chucking the plane around, you have to concentrate more on electronic warfare at the Offensive Weapons Officer's station. This gives it a nice tactical edge, and when you finally manage to fend off an attack on your ship, it's very satisfying.

But on the whole, *Megafortress* lacks the edge which would place it up there with the *F19*s and *AH73*s. There's just too much techie clicking and disk accessing and just not enough fast, furious action. The novelty of flying a one-off B-52 soon pales and you'll need to be dedicated if you're going to stick with the game through all of the available missions.

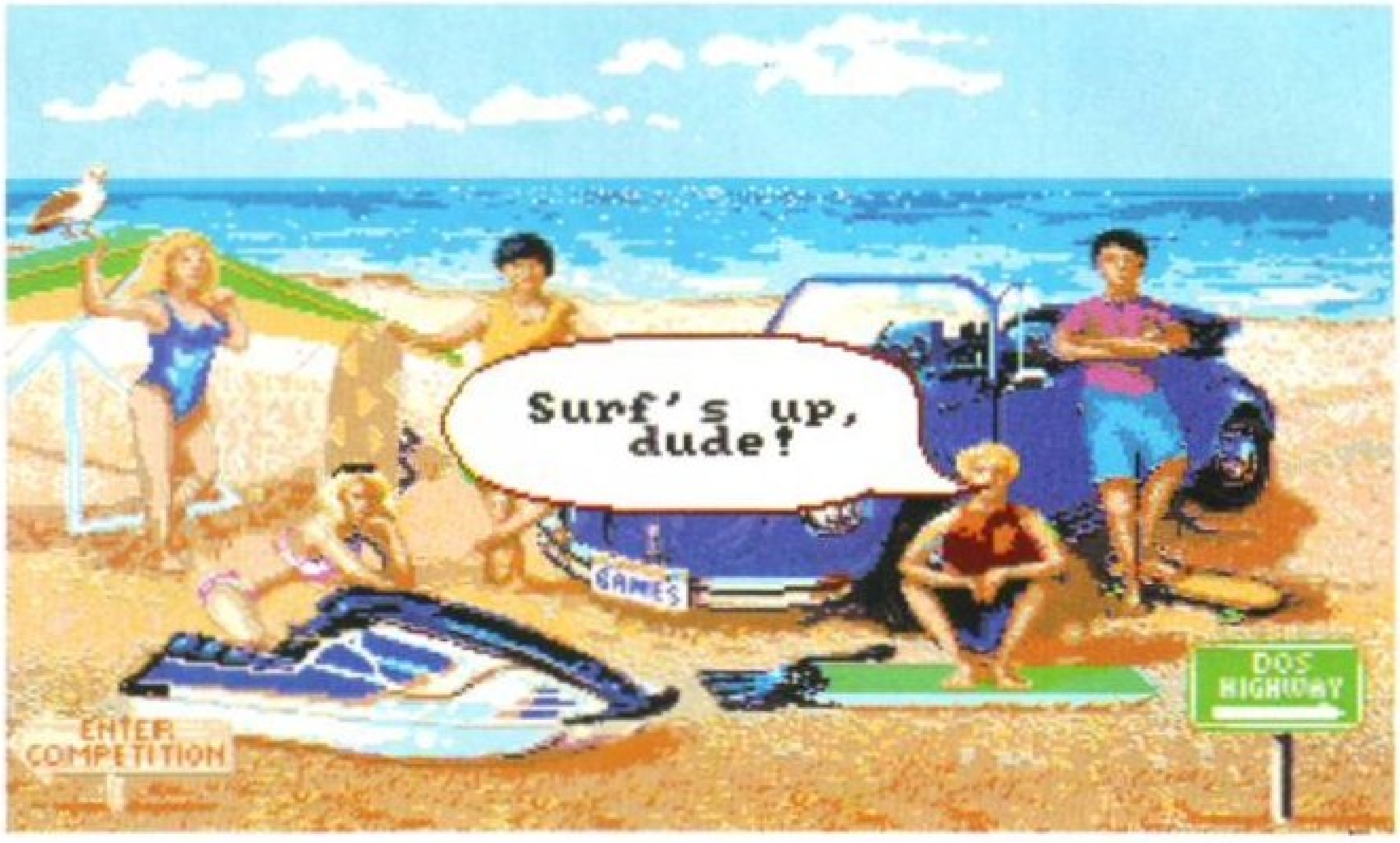
The supplied documentation is good, though, especially when you bear in mind the 'special price', and the level of detail is impressive if you're impressed by that sort of thing. Like *Space Shuttle*, *Megafortress* borders on the educational, and again like *Shuttle*, this is to the detriment of the seat-of-the-pants playability.

James Leach

Megafortress
Mindscape ■ £19.99

- **Loads of missions and plenty of atmosphere for a flight sim.**
- **Slow and cumbersome to play, and each mission takes ages to complete.**
- **Paradise for technical switch, button and dial freaks.**
- **Attractively priced, especially as it comes with some very clear, comprehensive and readable documentation.**
- **The outside views are dark and rather dreary, and the external views of the plane aren't too hot either.**
- **Gives you five demanding on-board jobs to do rather than just one.**

Verdict 77%



Welcome to the sunny beaches of California, where kids spend all day lazing round on the sand, talking their own language and playing their own sports. Yep, they're an unusual bunch of people and you can become one of them when you choose a game from this selection screen...

California Games 2

Yo dudes! Come on down to the Californian coast where sun, sea and surf are there for the taking; where there's action all day and all night; and, as it happens, where this game is based.

The earlier *California Games* failed to create much of an impact on the Amiga. This latest version is in the Epyx style and consists of several different events all related to the sun, sea, surf and snow (!), and they all involve simplistic controls and methodical joystick movements.

As for the events themselves, what's on offer? There are five sports of the Californian variety: hang-gliding, jet surfing, snowboarding, bodyboarding and of course that Stüssey favourite: skateboarding. They're a mixture of some known, and not so well-known, pastimes of the wacky residents of California, but they're also mixed in terms of enjoyment.

Bogus

Graphically, the games don't use the Amiga's abilities very well. The events are displayed in only 16 colours and while they look quite detailed and bright, they could have been much better. Some colourful title screens introduce many of the sections. Sound-wise there are some appropriate tunes, such as the rather ominous Wipeout on the bodyboarding event. The rocky tunes don't make up for the rocky and rough gameplay, though.

While *California Games 2* tries hard, and up to eight people can compete against each other, there are not enough events or enough variety in those events to keep you playing for very long. The simple joystick controls make it initially accessible but don't help the gameplay in the long term, although some may like reminiscing about similar games of the past, back when the C64 ruled the roost and *California Games* was the game to have.

Here we have a game that lives up to the fast-paced lifestyle of the place it's based on, where trends change quickly and the past is soon forgotten – if you get the game you'll soon forget about it and, like the hula-hoop, it will be destined for the back of your closet.

Tim Howell

California Games 2
Epyx/US Gold ■ £25.99

- **A variety of Californian events make the game initially interesting...**
- **...but when you start playing you find the gameplay tedious.**
- **Graphics only use 16 colours making the game look like a port.**
- **Simple controls help to make the game accessible but not very satisfying.**
- **In the end it's just like California – pretty but not a lot of substance...**

Amiga Format Verdict 64%

CALIFORNIA GAMES 2 – WHAT THE EVENTS ARE ALL ABOUT...

California Games 2 is based on five separate sub-games, each one different from the other, but all of them based on supposedly common Californian recreational activities. Pick your sporting vehicle, whether it be a hang glider, skateboard or surfboard, and be prepared to risk life and limb as you compete in these parochial pastimes. Here's what you have to do...



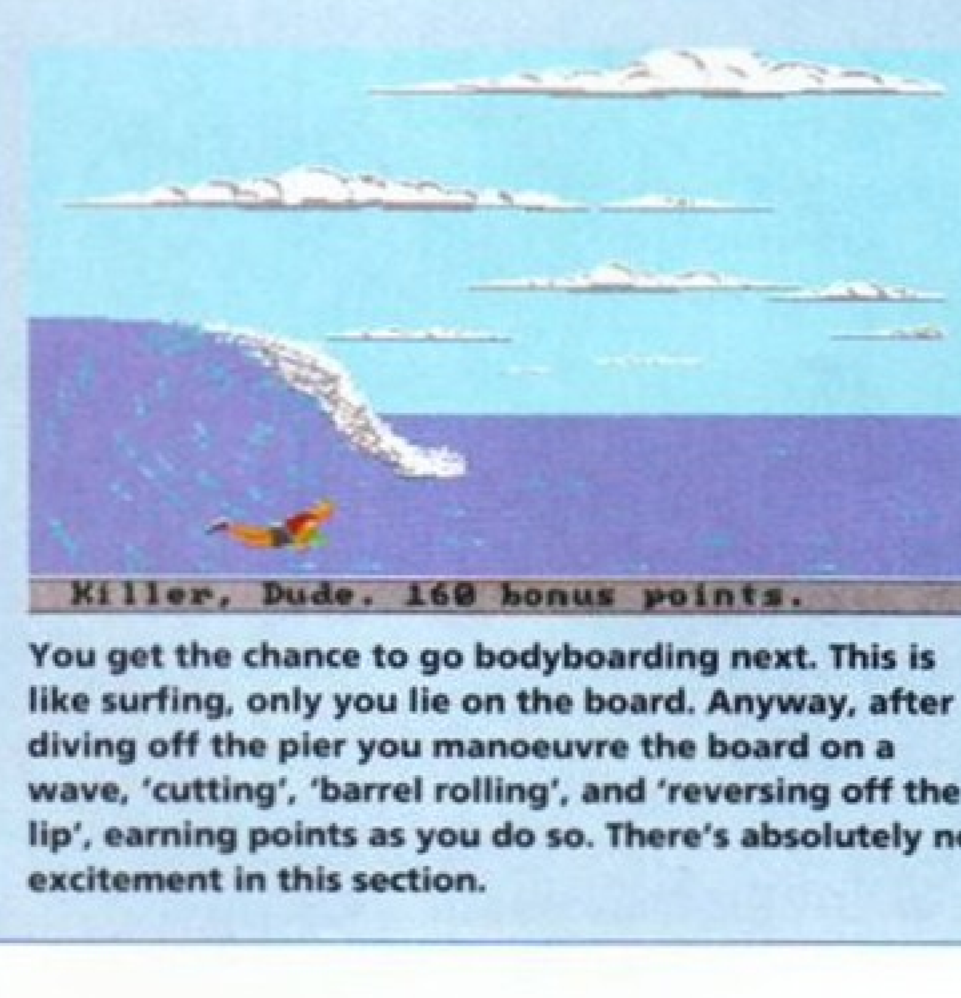
Hang-gliding involves you flying (surprise, surprise) a hang glider off a cliff and over the sea. You have to drop five water bombs on three targets in the water. Fun, eh? There's a bit more to it — you can loop the loop in your glider if you time things right — but not much, and generally the whole thing is tedious.



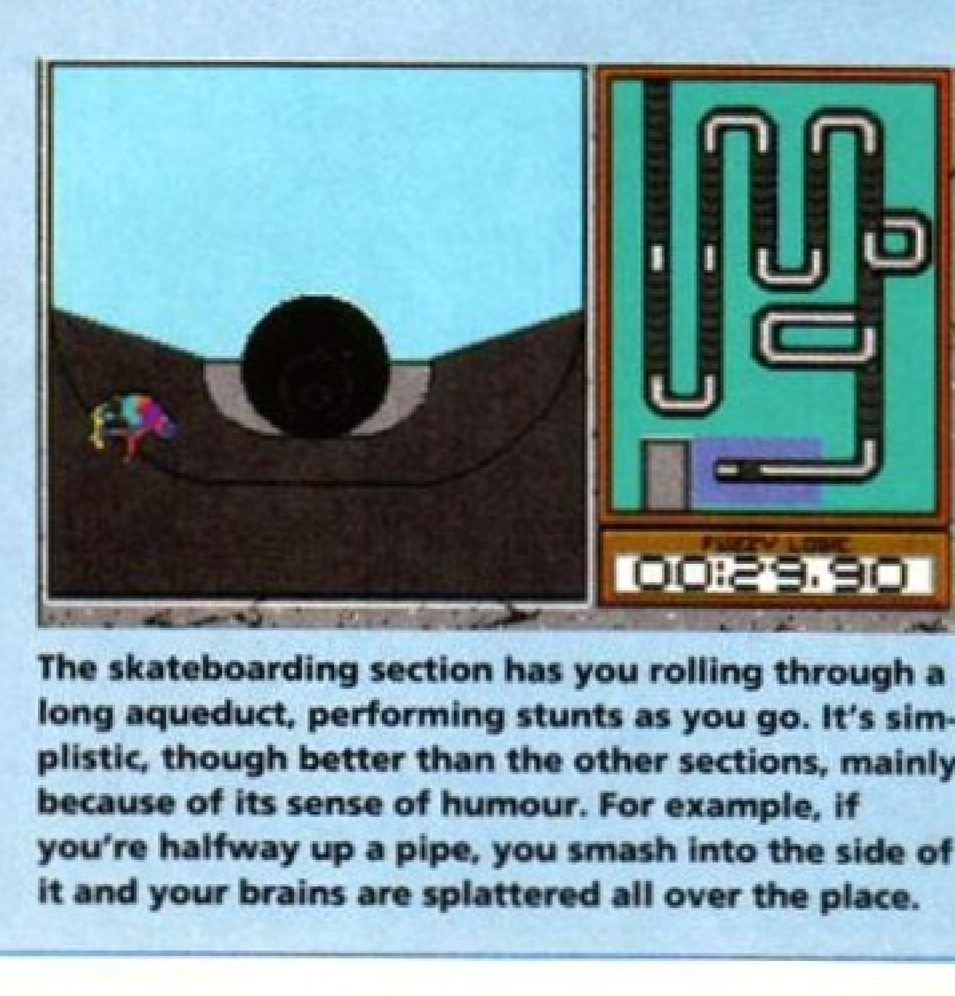
Jet surfing is a poor man's version of any first-person perspective racing game, just that you're on a jet ski rather than a car. Race round buoys making sure you stay between them. Movement is limited, but you have a choice of skis and characteristics, though they are rather sluggish and unrealistic.



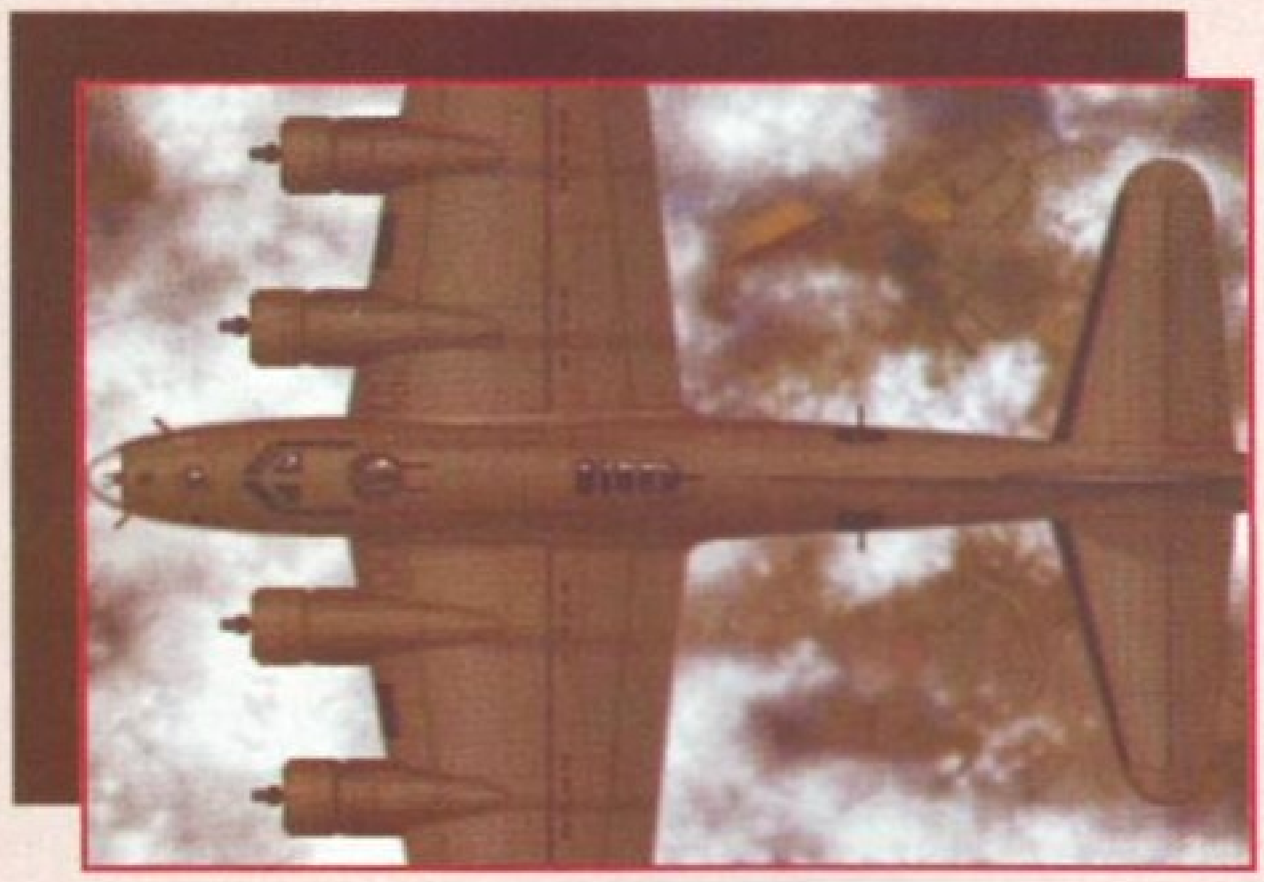
Once you parachute on to Mount Epyx, you begin the snowboarding event. This is viewed from a side-on angle which makes the event visually different. When you finish the first part you enter the Snowbowl. Here you ride your board on a half pipe, performing turns and handstands. Fun for a while.

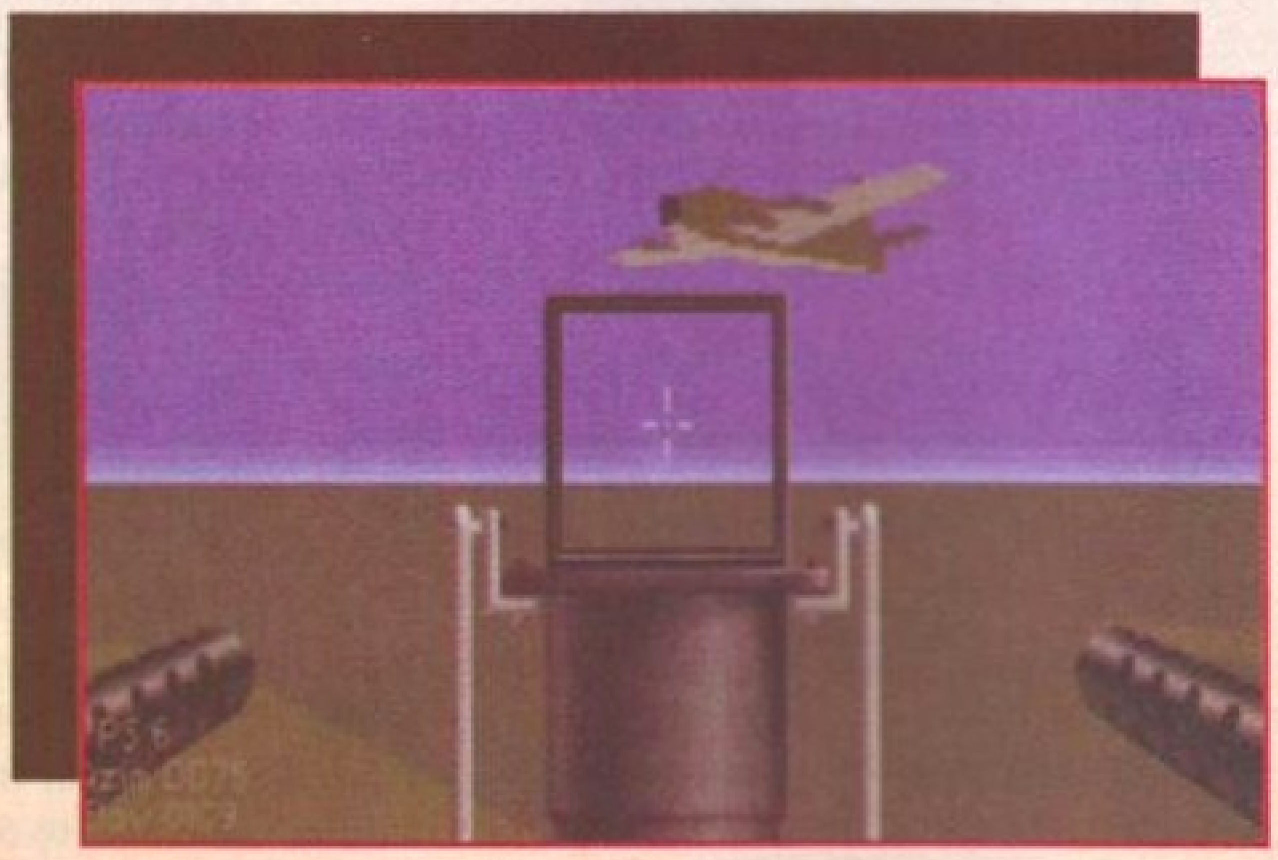


You get the chance to go bodyboarding next. This is like surfing, only you lie on the board. Anyway, after diving off the pier you manoeuvre the board on a wave, 'cutting', 'barrel rolling', and 'reversing off the lip', earning points as you do so. There's absolutely no excitement in this section.

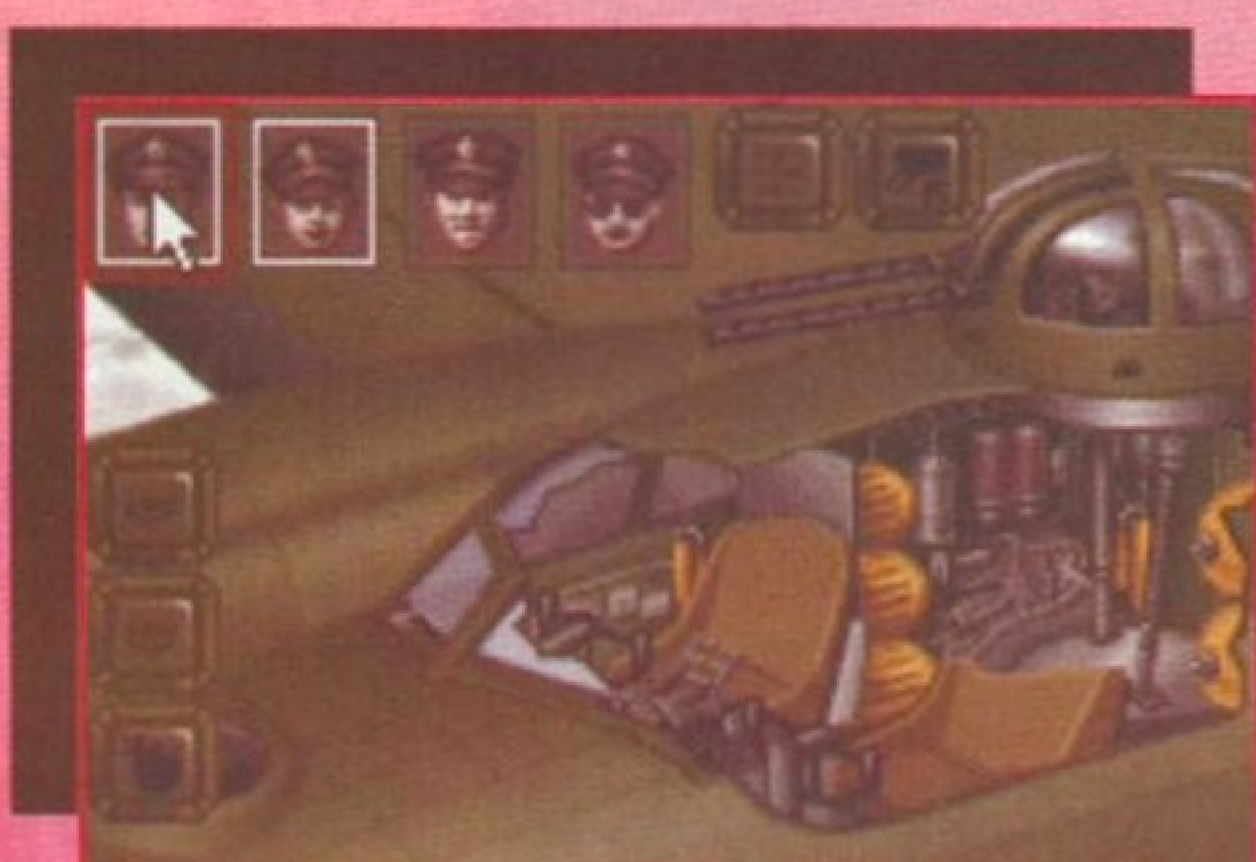


The skateboarding section has you rolling through a long aqueduct, performing stunts as you go. It's simplistic, though better than the other sections, mainly because of its sense of humour. For example, if you're halfway up a pipe, you smash into the side of it and your brains are splattered all over the place.









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Crazy Seasons

Idea Software/The Software Business ■ £25.99

Have you ever watched *Quantum Leap*? You know, where Sam Beckett's time-machine has gone bonkers, and he whizzes around in the fourth dimension putting things right, where they have previously gone wrong. Well *Crazy Seasons* is nothing like that.

Your time-machine has cacked up and sent boxes of 'time fluid' all over the simply drawn world. Your job, as a strange blue blob, is to bounce around the platforms putting the boxes back into alignment, while avoiding an abundance of nasties that will kill you with the slightest touch. Compared with recent platformers this is way behind the times, but fortunately very playable. Three years ago this would have been a great game, now it's an enjoyable diversion.

Clare Hodgson

Verdict 68%



Sarrat the Mage, who crossed the horse and the eagle to produce the pegasus, later crossed an orange and a duck to make...

Warriors of Releyne

Impressions ■ £29.99

Well, the Dharaks are rampaging and on the war path again. And it looks like it's another job for the Wind Riders of Releyne, and yet another average war-game to join the ever-increasing Amiga fraternity. *Warriors of Releyne* is packed to bursting with those dreaded hexes, and it also features a combat system based on rolling dice, which has some extremely silly effects; such as both the attacker and defender getting killed or the defender being turned into a hobbit.

In fact it's stunningly uninspired in virtually every department – although, with a lovely touch of irony, the graphics are actually rather nice. The game suffers from a clumsy control system, whereby you have to manually scour the huge playing area for your own people by clicking on a compass, instead of scrolling around the map itself.

However on the plus side, *Warriors* comes with a free construction kit, allowing you to knock up scenarios that, um, look exactly like the three that come with the game anyway. An eminently forgettable affair.

John Pillar

Verdict 59%



What is this huge floating thing blocking out the sun? Is it a plane, is it a bird, is it superman? No it's an incredibly large piece of parchment with some incredibly large writing on it.

Big blond blokes singing about Spam? Well not really. It's actually a historical strategy game…

Fur coats, horned helmets, longships with shields down the side – that's what the word 'vikings' conjures up for most of us. But in this pseudo-historical strategy game you're on the side of the goodies. It's the baddies who have all the fun.

This American-produced game evades a few historical realities to place you as the leader of a warlike community in England around the 11th century. Up to six players can take part, which gives a choice of two scenarios. When playing against humans, each one of you is leader of a different kingdom. Each one must build his realm into a workable society; building castles and managing resources plus invading neighbouring lands to slaughter the population and plunder the wealth.

Thordar Skullsplitter

On your own, however, you can face up to five computer-controlled viking chiefs. These guys play differently though. Which means you have to be more constructive and less violent if you are to outwit them.

After a pretty HAM loading screen you set the type of game and number of players, then choose where your home castle is to be placed. Among the many options, all the regions of the country can be occupied or switched off and there are five difficulty levels which range from easy to very tough. Most important, perhaps, you can set the target for the number of territories you have to occupy before you win.

The game display, in a full 64 colours, is just a map with icons on it and a few other bits on the left-hand side. It benefits from nicely drawn sprites and terrain, but don't hold your breath for the sound effects.

Nigel Bonecracker

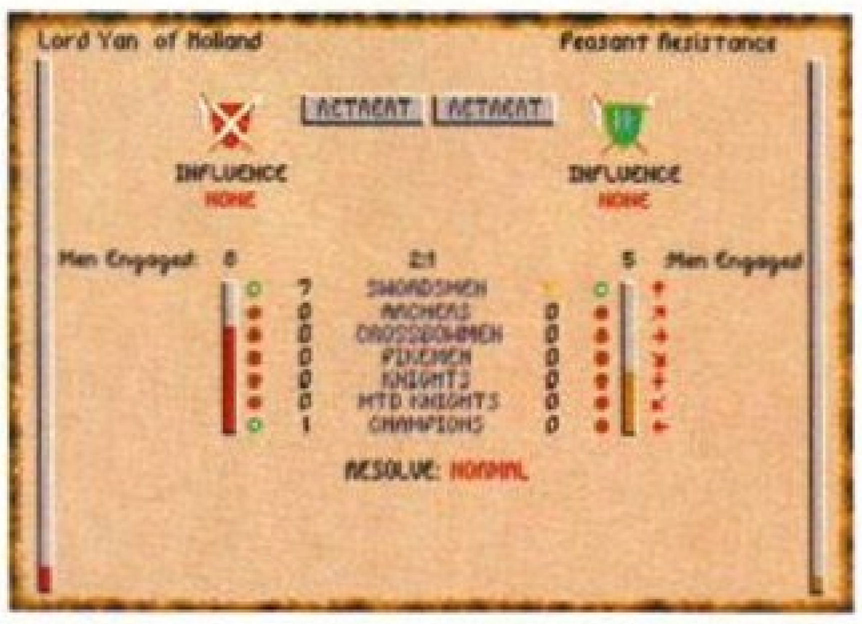
The game is played in turns, and the first job is to make sure your people are fed. A scroll appears at the bottom of the screen with Food and Harvest written on it. You can then move the pointer around the map and over your territories to see how much food your country needs (or has if it has produced a surplus).

Next step is to look to your armies. You can create and add to them by buying more soldiers and equipment, then allocate them to individual task forces to go about the business of beating up your peace-loving neighbours.

Battle is a simple affair. The manual says you should have twice as many people as your opponents, so bully-boy tactics win the day. As battle wears on, you are updated on how



The sheep are in a state of panic! Wales is completely waterlogged and they're making a run for the sunny patch around Birmingham.



Seconds out, round one, DONG! The great battle commences. Lord Yan's team has eight men engaged so far, but none of them are married.



Phew, I thought that parchment would never go. I mean, not only is it so big that nobody else could fit in the land, but it didn't even bring any beer! And the mess it made in the bathroom...

Vikings

many men each side are losing, so if your guys are being whipped, you can always pull out.

Once your invasion attempt has succeeded or failed, it's on to the next king's turn to try to take over some land. As the game progresses, other factors come into play: you may need to create a port with a small convoy of ships to take your armies abroad, for example, and you'll need to look for and mine ore to keep up your weapon supply.

Roger Todgerthumper

Different types of troops and technologies are important. To storm castles you need catapults to weaken the walls, but the defending castle can shoot at the catapults with their archers.

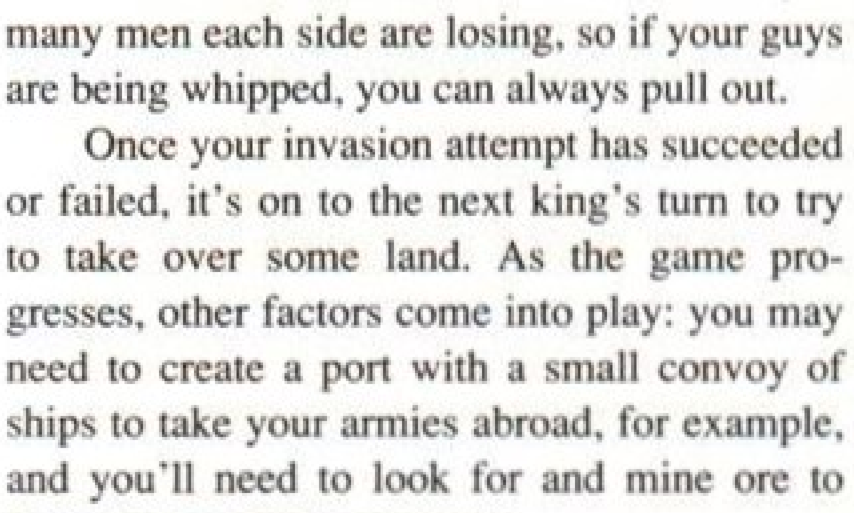
You will also need to build castles to defend your land, but you first have to clear the land then build a tower, followed by a keep, then a small castle and finally a large castle. Each piece of land can only produce so many soldiers – only large castles and the home castle can produce armies.

Castles also influence your troop's performance when fighting and their presence in a territory increases the taxes coming from that area. And, of course, as well as money from the taxes, all of these things need raw materials, so someone has to go and look for them.

There is hardly any way of getting raw materials except for going into a territory with mountains, trees or other things. To get money you have to get miners to look for gold, silver and iron mines and this costs money as well.

Vikings is a reasonably intelligent strategy game, but a few more active additions, like the ability to control the action in battles and new weapons every few years, would improve its accessibility. There's simply not enough variation in the pattern of events and in the factors that govern success or failure. You can't help feel it would have benefited from a more detailed, historical feel or from a more fun, arcadey, *Defender of the Crown*-like approach. As it is, it's mediocre.

Yan Holland



Rogaland is no use to anyone anyway. Nothing but four goats, a pile of dung and two peasants (and both of those are dead).

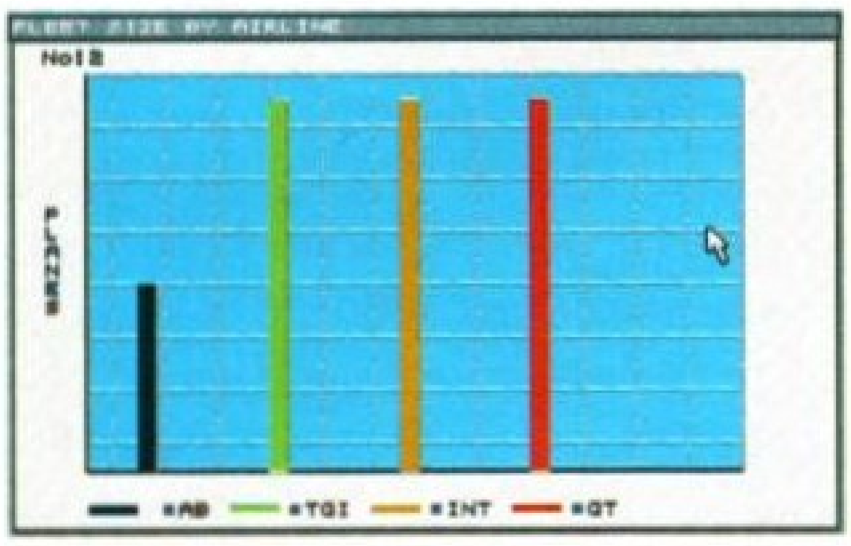
Vikings
Krisalis ■ £25.99

- Attractive 64-colour graphics but no in-game sound effects.
- Will get very tedious after you have played all the levels.
- There are plenty of options, but no new features as time progresses.
- Save and load option, plus up to six players can play at a time.

Amiga Format Verdict **62%**



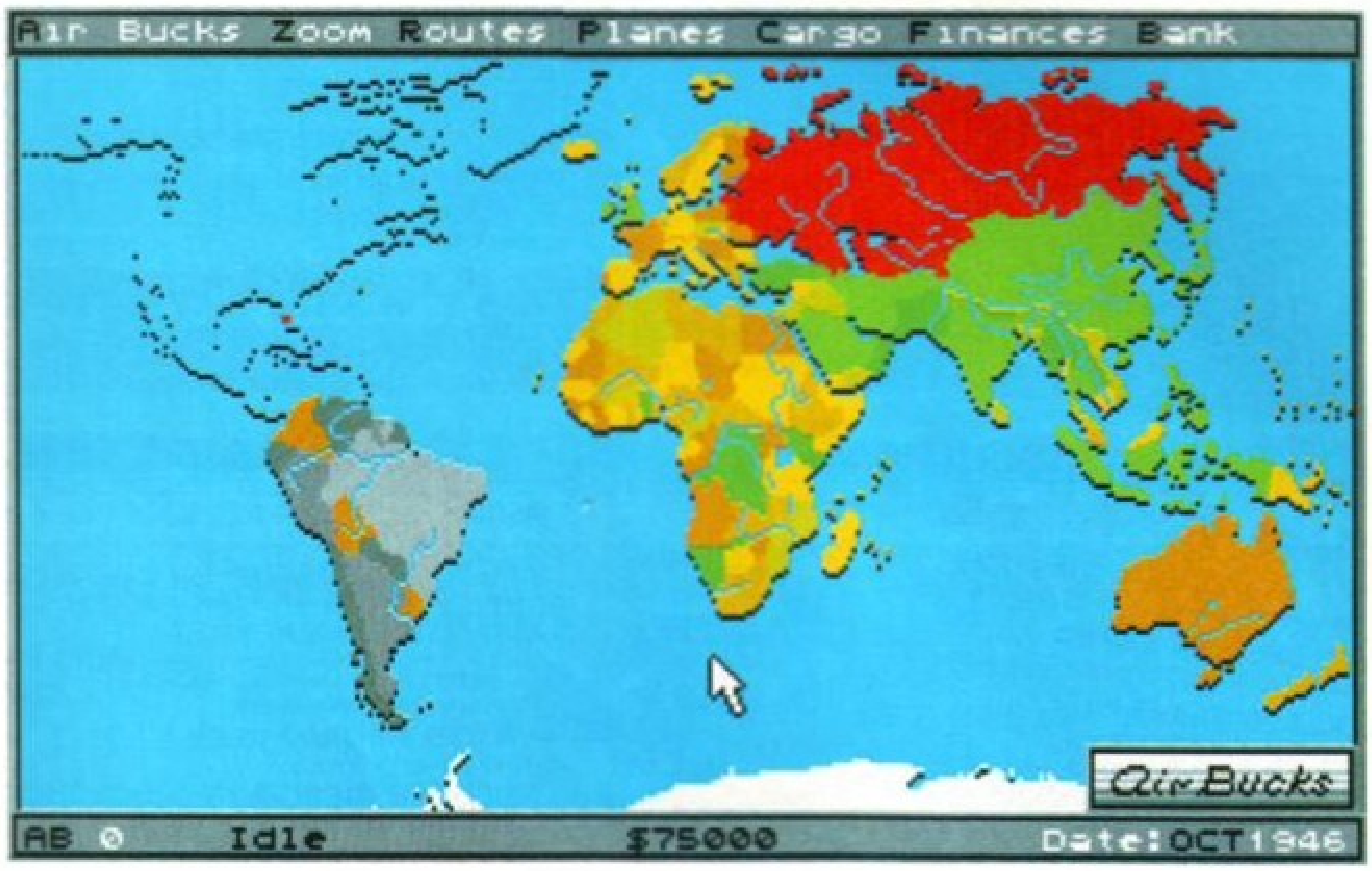
Early in the game there is little of the world to see, but very important jobs to do. This screen enables you to pick up the tasks that, later in the game, will make life much more profitable.



Woah! Interesting graph city with excellent coloured bars to show how you and the competition are getting on money-wise. This is the stuff young cash-cruisers' lives are made for.

Air Bucks' main game screen shows various elements, from routes to the amount of dosh you have made or that you owe the bank. Yes, it's all incredibly informative, but it won't knock your monitor into tomorrow with its graphical wonders.

HARD DISK INSTALLABLE



Air Bucks

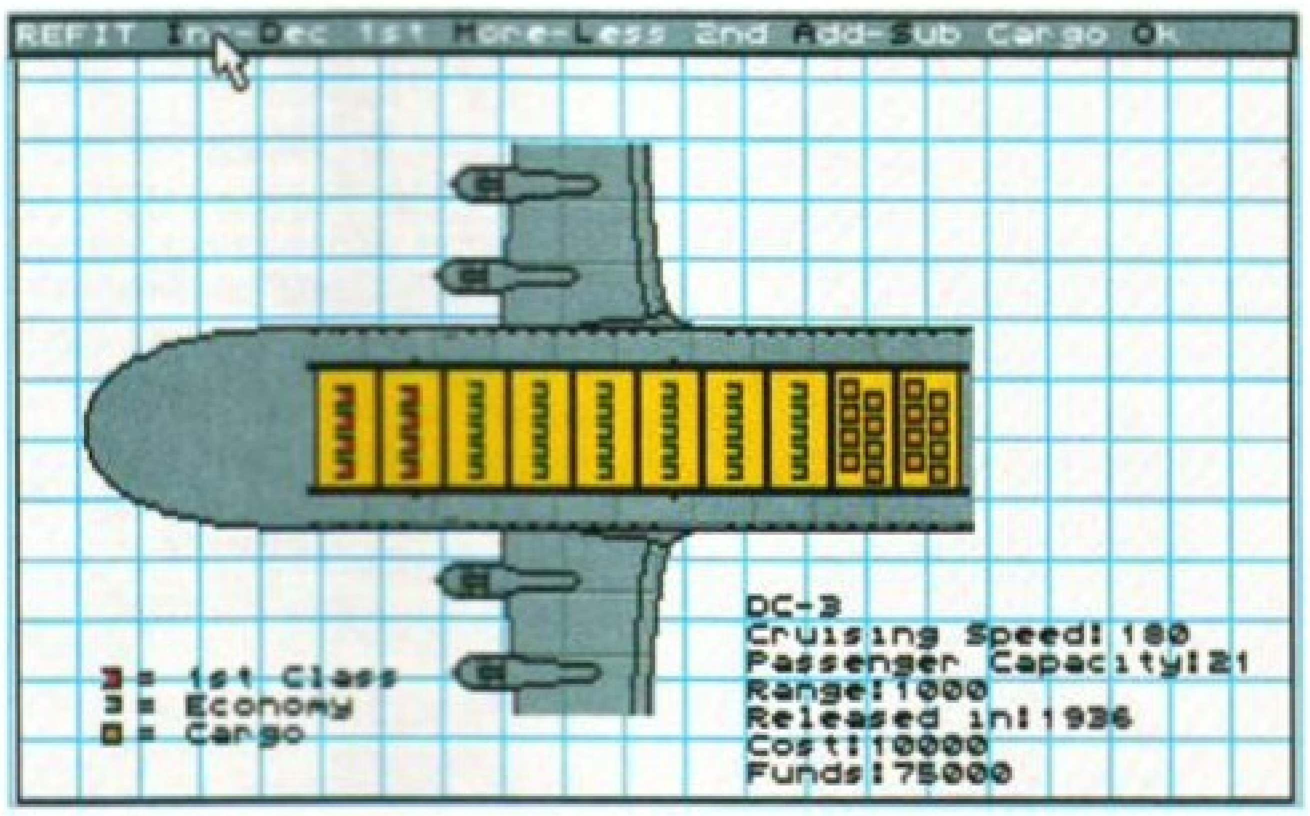
Wow! It's great, you play the role of Gringile the Gnome as he spends a few hours taking out alien hordes with his magical, mithral razor and V-11 WolfBat cruiser... Well, not quite. In fact not at all. *Air Bucks* is a game that requires more thought than your average role-payer and more strategic planning than a war-game.

Yes, you get to play Sir Freddie Laker — for those of you too young to recall the heady days of this heroic, bald entrepreneur, just think of him as a hip version of Richard Branson — while you attempt to set up a successful airline business.

You start the game with a knackered old Dakota DC-3 plane and a measly $100,000 (I'm not sure what that is in real money) and the situation is complicated by the fact that the year is 1946. The year, you would assume, would work in your favour, what with there being thousands of unemployed USAF pilots looking for things to do. Oh yes, by the way, you start the game in the United States.

Waiting to do the business

You can play with up to four players and there are different levels of difficulty set for each one. I can only imagine what it would be like to play against real-life human beings — no-one else wanted to play, so I was stuck with three computer opponents all of whom seemed to have a much better idea of world domination via commercial airlines than I did.

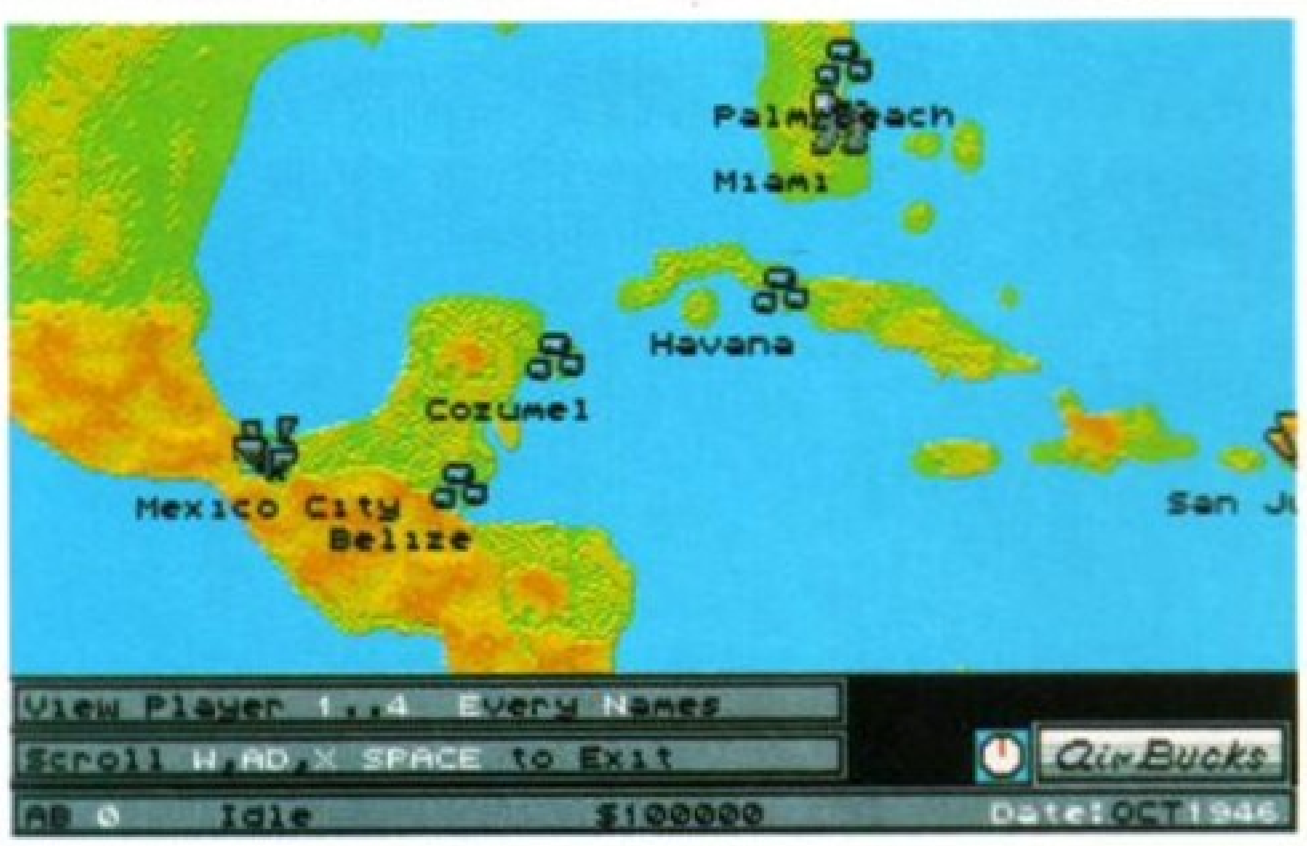


Your first plane. Yes it's a knackered, old Dakota DC-3, and appears to have no roof. In this screen you can get to fit your aircraft out with lots of stuff to entice new passengers.

Air Bucks has a great deal of processing to do, so there is also a great deal of waiting around while the statistics resulting from each player's decisions are calculated. This could have been done with style (and the occasional animated graphic of a hideous nose-dived crash into the Appalachias where the survivors are forced to eat each other before moving on to the airline dinners) but nope. What you get is a screen with the standard map of the world in front of you, and the incredibly dull background music blaring out in tiny synthesiser style. Once all the calculations are made, the date changes and it's time for you to move on to another endeavour. Could do better.

But the point of this game is definitely not the graphics, which are average, or the music, which is a bunch of notes slung together so they don't sound too nasty. The meat of *Air Bucks* lies in the planning, the thought and the sheer commercial instinct that you are prepared to expend on it.

A bit of the world is your money-making oyster, now all you have to do is work out exactly which bit. The info boxes at the bottom just sit there uninterestingly.



Traveller's checks

You are in charge of every aspect of the business, from the routes you decide to bid for, down to the level of luxury the passengers will put up with, while still paying the exorbitant fees that you will inevitably want to charge for a trip from Tuscaloosa to Tuscon. You have to oversee the fitting and re-fitting of your aircraft, make the decision as to when to sell the DC-3 in order to buy a newer, bigger and more profitable aircraft — damn, you have to do everything. There is no delegation in 1940s business or so it seems.

All this calls for a level head and a total lack of emotion. The biggest, and potentially most profitable or harmful decisions are whether or not to approach the bank for a loan, or to flog off some shares. The latter also means keeping the shareholders happy. But sooner or later you're going to have to approach someone for some money. This really is the critical stage.

Basically, *Air Bucks* is a game that will have plenty of appeal to those people who enjoy fiddling with profit and loss ledgers, who adore stomping on other people's chances of success, who go all wet and squidgy over the idea of flying as a way to buy a Beverly Hills mansion, who ooze over good gameplay, but don't really give a monkey's oxygen mask for great sound or graphics. A good addition to Amiga's armoury of game genres.

Tim Smith

Air Bucks
Impressions ■ £29.99

- Great idea, well-executed.
- Attention to business detail is admirable.
- Plenty of scope, the world changes each time you play.
- The boring sound and graphics don't help the game at all.
- The statistics take take too long to process.
- No decent crash scenes.

AMIGA FORMAT Verdict **72%**



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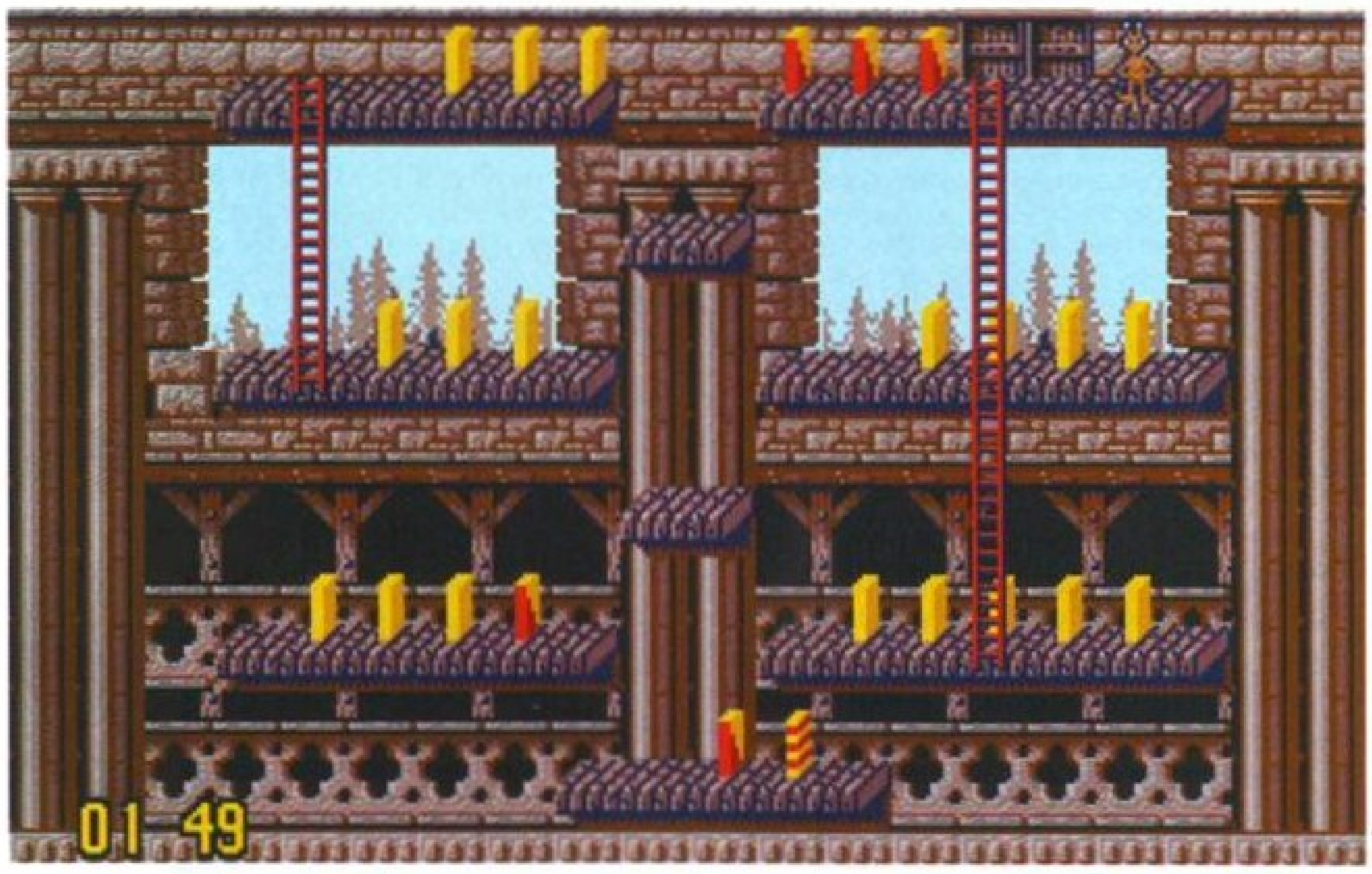
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FutureWorld computers

Dominoes abound in Ocean's latest platform puzzler. But does it live up to the hype? Follow GI Ant on the trail of Colin Curly's fave cheesy snacks.



The aim of the game is to arrange the dominoes, so that when GI Ant pushes one block, the rest will follow, with the trigger domino (the one with three red stripes) falling last.

Once there was
a little old ant,
Thought he'd move
a rubber tree plant,
Anyone knows an ant can't,
Move a rubber tree plant.
But he had high hopes,
Yes he had high hopes,
High in the sky,
apple pie hopes...

Push-Over





NEEDS 1 MEG

High hopes and a lot of determination are what you're going to need, especially if you want to crack Ocean's latest, *Push-Over*. Colin Curly of Quavers fame and GI Ant team up to bring you cheesy flavour crisps, high-profile television adverts and now a cutsey platform game for your Amiga. Now that you've been taken in by the hype and have parted with your hard-earned cash, was it worth it? You will be pleasantly surprised to find out that this particular combination of marketing strategies does work as a game. It's nice to know that big sponsorship deals don't have to mean duff games.

Colin has done his usual trick and totally freaked out over the total cheesiness of his favourite crisp. In the mayhem that ensued he lost his quavers down the one and only anthill that's around (hands-up who out there hasn't done exactly the same with their car keys down a gutter). Help is at hand in the form of Colin's little soldier ant friend, who has volunteered to brave the depths of the hill to find his mate's crisps (smacks a bit of product placement doesn't it?).

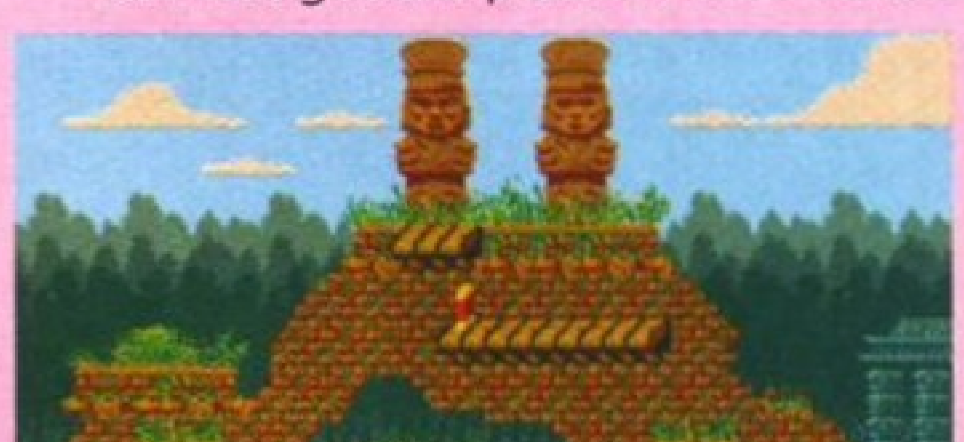
GI Ant, without even a tiny glimmer of fear, dives straight into the opening, ready to risk life and limb for his pal. Little did either of them know of the parallel universe that existed right beneath their feet, Domino Domain. And what does he find down there? Dominoes, that's what, hundreds upon hundreds of the little yellow blocks.

So any time you're getting low

As anyone who's seen the Guinness Book of Records will remember, the Japanese have a fetish for setting up dominoes in wild and wacky ways. Teams spend months designing

YOUR GUIDE TO 'BREAKING THE WORLD DOMINOES RECORD, WHILE DRINKING A PINT OF GUINNESS'

Still not got the picture? Well here's a run through of one of the levels with bridgers, tumblers and ascenders to boot.



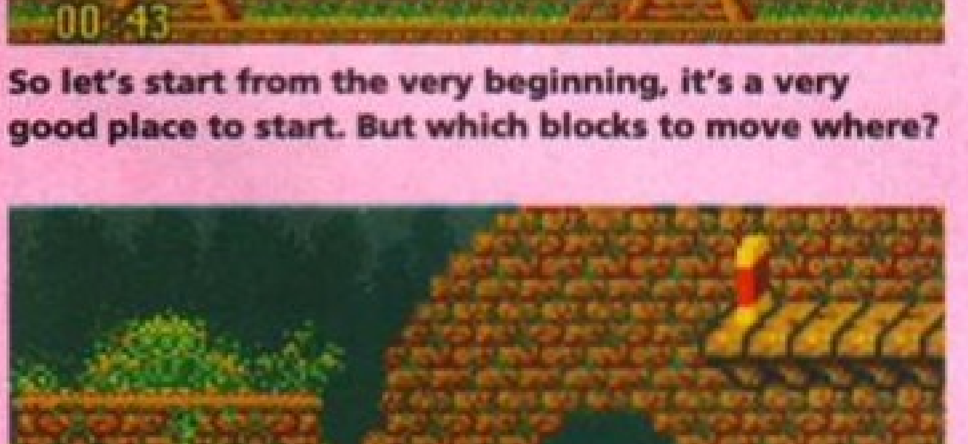
So let's start from the very beginning, it's a very good place to start. But which blocks to move where?



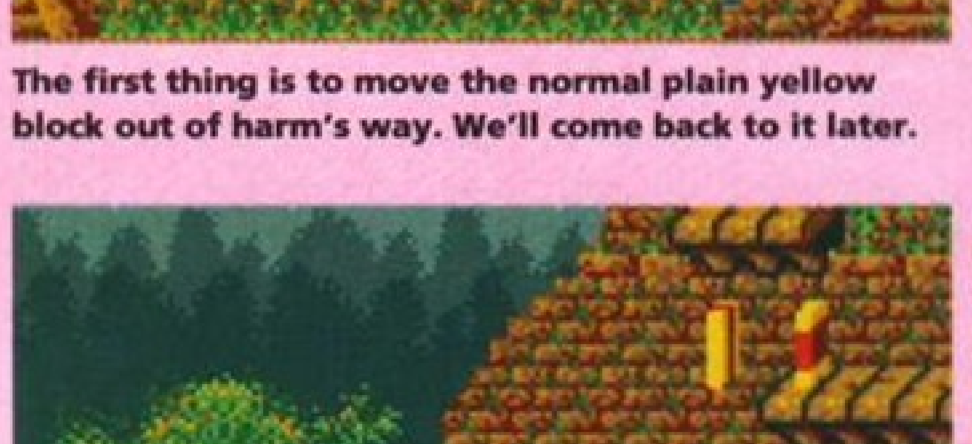
The first thing is to move the normal plain yellow block out of harm's way. We'll come back to it later.



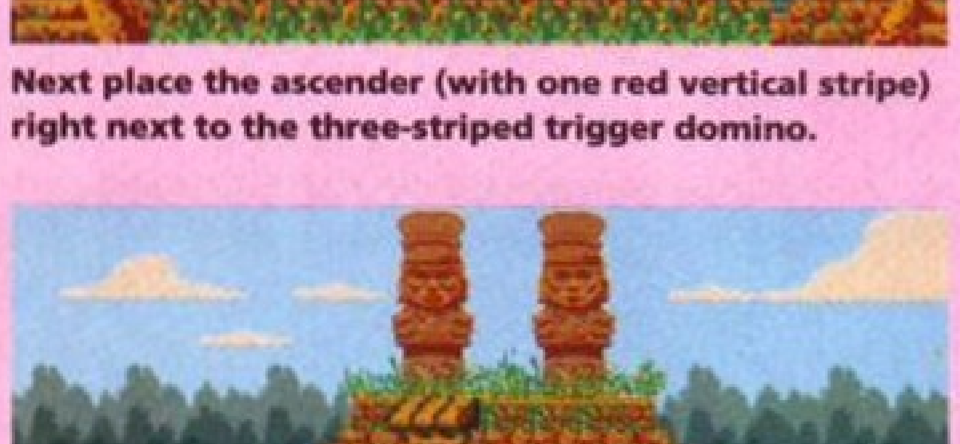
Next place the ascender (with one red vertical stripe) right next to the three-striped trigger domino.



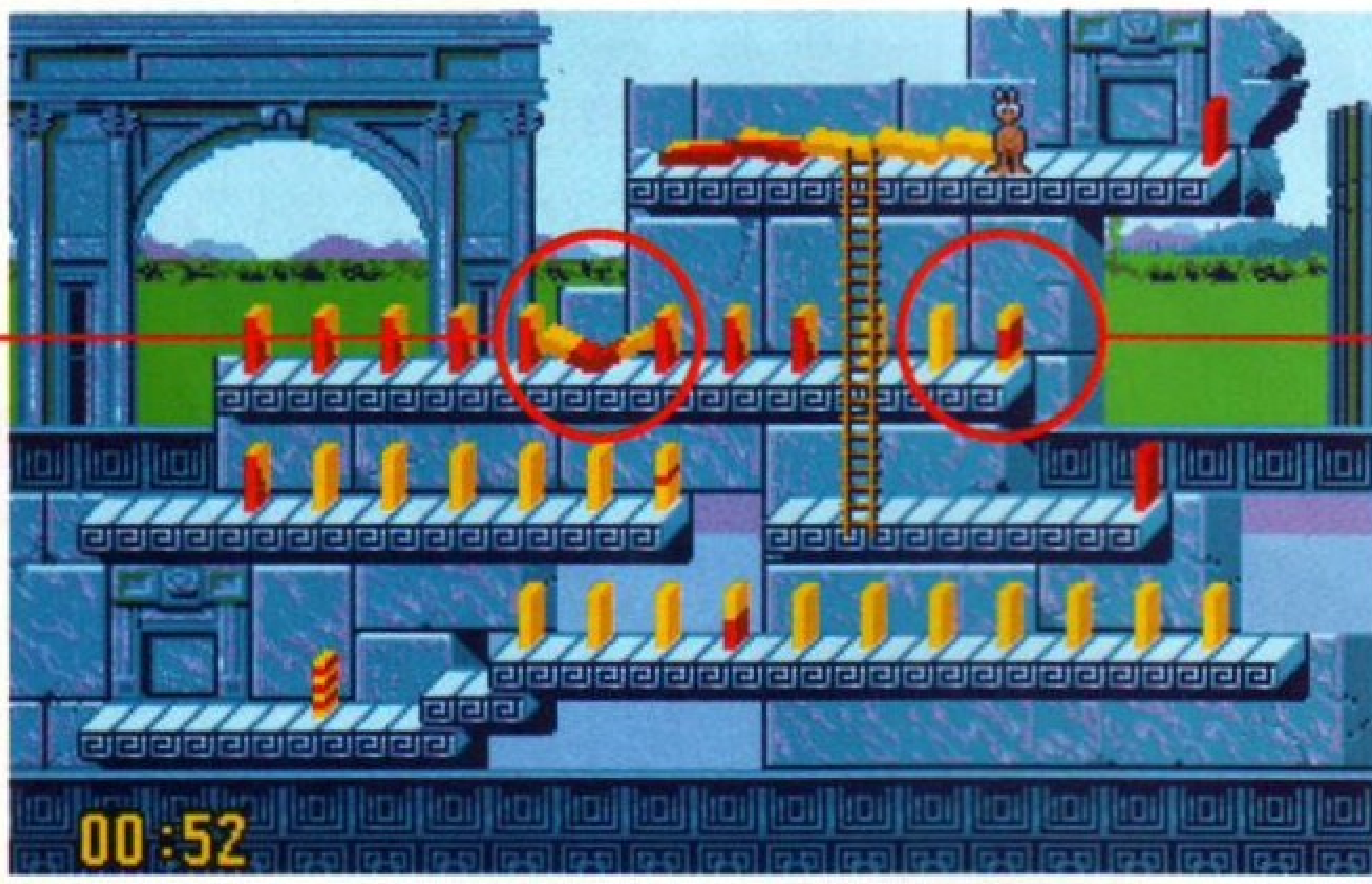
Put the normal domino in position behind the Vanisher (two horizontal stripes) and push.



Stand watching while the ascender starts the tumbler rolling off the platform to hit the stopper below.



The tumbler turns and knocks the bridger (one horizontal stripe), then finally we're home.

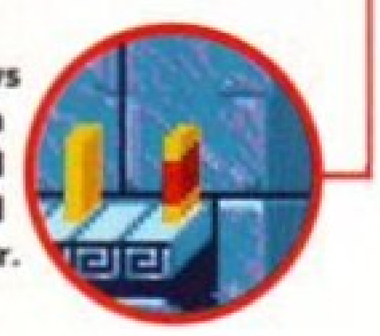


You've only got one push per screen, so make sure you use it well. But if you cock up a screen you can try, try and try again, from the beginning, as many times as you like.



A Splitter domino splits into two when hit by a falling block – bloomin' useful when there's a block on either side of it.

A Tumbler will defy the laws of momentum and keep on tumbling until it is stopped by a fallen block or turned around by a red stopper.



and setting up their thousands of coloured dominoes, so that when one gets pushed over, all the others fall and make pretty patterns on the floor. Well worth it... not! However this sparked off a passion for such things that culminated in the creation of the most obscure toy in history, Domino Rally (ask your dad if you can't remember it).

The basic aim in *Push-Over* is to set up your blocks in a certain way, so that when you make your one-and-only push, all the dominoes will topple. The trigger block, distinctively patterned with three red stripes, should fall last. If all dominoes were alike, it would be a dull world to live in and, guess what, they're not. The yellow blocks are differentiated by red stripes and diagonals, each pattern representing different attributes, including tumblers, which seem to have mastered the art of perpetual motion, ascenders, which appear to have never heard of the law of gravity, and exploders that, well… explode.

Instead of letting go

Those who like their games to do more than make pretty noises when you kill big blue aliens will love *Push-Over*. It introduces you gradually to the ideas behind the gameplay, then slowly builds up to levels that could push the self-destruct button in your brain. The whole aim is to collect the ten packets of cheesy-flavoured snacks that Colin lost, which you get every 10 screens or so. But, to tell the truth, when you get further into the game, merely completing a level (Quavers or no Quavers) is reward enough.

Push-Over comes on two disks, not that the game is so complex it needs the space, but because an amusing intro sequence takes up most of the space on the first floppy. Admittedly, the animation and bluesy sound track would take pride of place in the demo section of ***Amiga Format***, but when you've seen it, you've seen it, and it's pretty unlikely that you'll want to sit through it again. Unfortunately, you can't skip the intro. That's understandable when you consider the sponsorship deal but it's still a little frustrating when all you want to do is solve the puzzles.

Just remember that ant

It is tempting to put *Push-Over* in the same bracket as the classic *Lemmings*. Both need careful planning ahead and split-second timing to master. One of the more noticeable differences is, of course, that dominoes don't move along with cute bouncing blue hair. *Push-Over* is a puzzle game unlike any we've ever seen before, original ideas and a lot of elbow grease have gone into making an addictive product.

We thoroughly enjoyed putting *Push-Over* through its paces and won't be shoving it to the back burners until we've eaten our way through thousands of packets of those very curly Quavers. Although we may turn the sound down after a while.

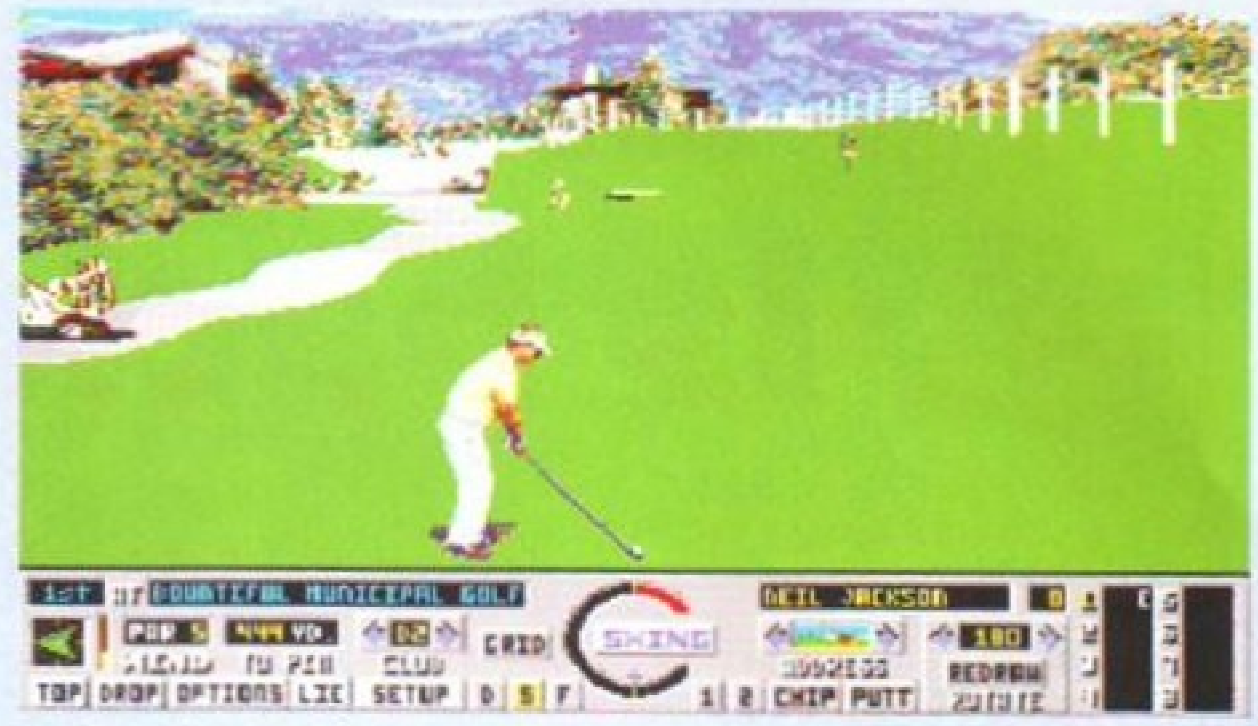
Whoops there goes another rubber tree plant...

Clare Hodgson *with a little help from Sammy Cahn and Jimmy van Heusen*

Push-Over
Ocean ■ £25.99

- Despite the hype, this is still a damn good puzzle game.
- 100 levels of lemmingsy conundrums for your entertainment.
- Cute graphics and a user-friendly level code input system.
- The gameplay may get a little bit repetitive after a while.

Verdict **86%**



Teeing off on the first at the Bountiful golf course in the Rocky Mountains ... pity about the weather though.

Links Bountiful

US Gold ■ £17.99

Hard drive only ■ Requires original Links program

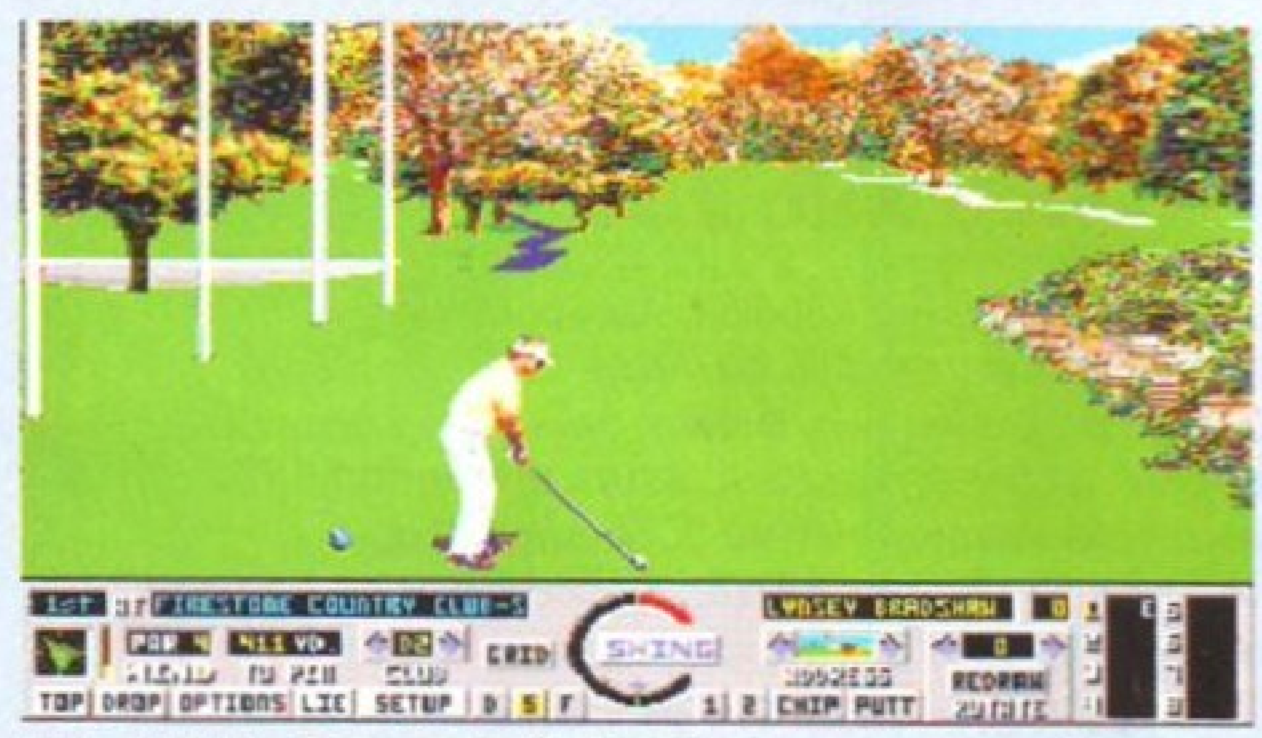
This is the first in a series of planned *Links* add-on disks, and it's an excellent starter if you're thinking of building a collection. There are many good views, right from the first hole which shows the rolling fairways, bordered by a road with a white picket fence. The backgrounds depict the Wasatch mountains (part of the Rockies) on a slightly overcast day.

A neat feature of all the *Links* add-ons is the upgrade included for the original *Links* game system: now it does its screen redraws secretly, saving time. On-screen messages in the corner tell you the redraw is occurring. There's also an improved wind indicator which is easier to read. The whole lot is dead easy to install and upgrade: it's all automated and virtually idiot-proof.

The *Bountiful* course is fairly difficult, but supplied in the packaging is an original Bountiful scorecard, showing the layouts of each hole in detail. This comes in useful when you're dealing with *Bountiful's* trickier holes.

Neil Jackson

Verdict **88%**



A beautiful day for a round of golf at the Firestone county club in Ohio – it's easier but just as interesting as the Bountiful links.

Links Firestone

US Gold ■ £17.99

Hard drive only ■ Requires original Links program

The *Firestone* add-on course is set at the Firestone Country Club, in Akron, Ohio. Filmed on a beautiful clear day in the autumn, *Firestone* looks as gorgeous as it plays. The trees are all resplendent in their golden brown autumn colours, providing a wealth of stunning displays.

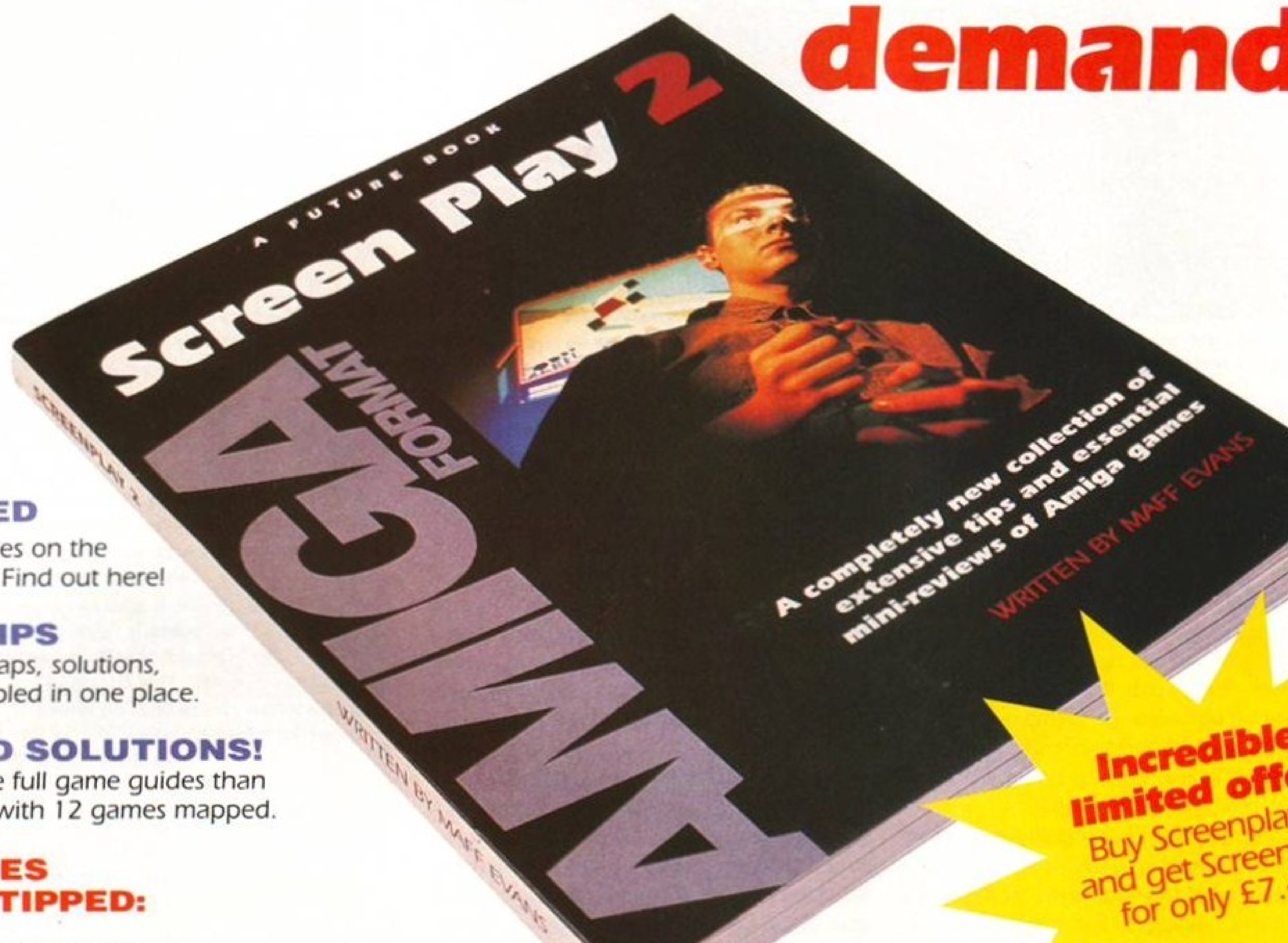
***Firestone* is slightly easier to play than *Bountiful* – most of the greens are visible from the tees but that doesn't make it any the less interesting – it'll take a while to master, just like the real thing. The third hole is a tight right-hand dog-leg (and the pin is totally obscured by trees), and there's a nasty stream running right across the fairway just short of the hole. If you haven't heard Links' 'wet plop' sound effects yet, this is where you'll most likely catch it.**

As with *Bountiful* , *Firestone* includes an upgrade to the original *Links* program. Also included is a scoresheet from the Firestone course – with all the holes displayed very clearly. If you already own *Links, Firestone* is an excellent choice if you're looking for impressive visuals.

Neil Jackson

Verdict **89%**

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Super Tetris

There's a saying in old Russia. Roughly translated, it goes something like: "A man playing *Tetris* cannot be expected to plough his field, even if it's about to rain." Quite what this means no one's really sure, but the fact is that it remains one of the simplest and yet widely played games since – er, that other simple, widely played game.

Now Spectrum Holobyte have fiddled about with it, tarted it up somewhat and MicroProse have released a new version under the grand name of *Super Tetris*. But the question is, is it super? Well...

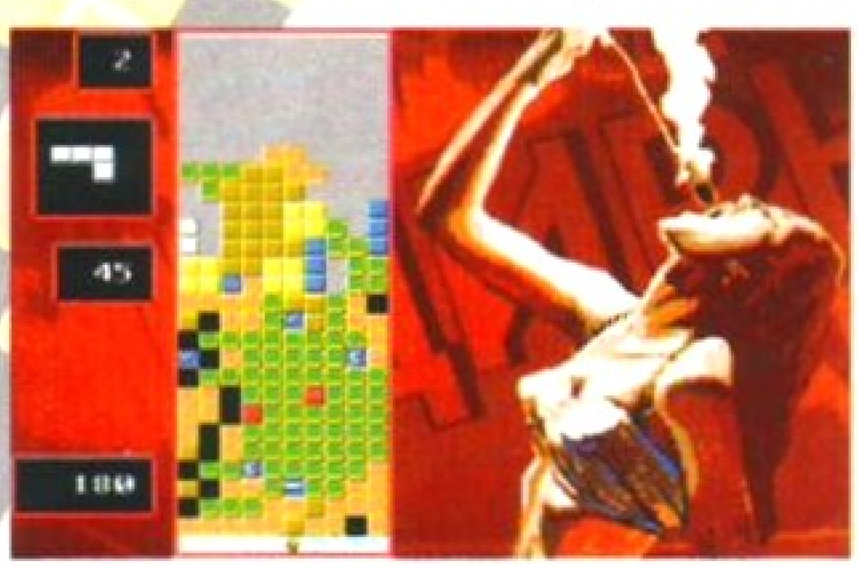
A nice cup of Tetris

Everyone knows how the game works. (If you don't, have a look at '*Tetris* through the ages' at the bottom of this page, but hurry up.) This super clone is, as you might expect, quite similar. This time, though, the pit has two halves. The bottom half is filled with rubble and treasures, while the top half is normal. Pieces fall as usual and you do your damnedest to fit them in. When you do, the line disappears and instead of a piece falling next, a number of bombs appear – the number depends on how many lines you've just cleared. These can be moved and rotated as normal. When they hit part of a stacked piece, they explode (as bombs do) and destroy it. Thus they can be used to clear away your mistakes and reopen gaps you may have covered.

Now, say you've just cleared a line in the bottom half of the pit. (Go on, say it.) Instead of the pieces moving down to fill up the gap, they scroll upwards from the bottom, revealing part of a picture. To win the level, you need to clear all the bottom-half lines to completely expose the picture.

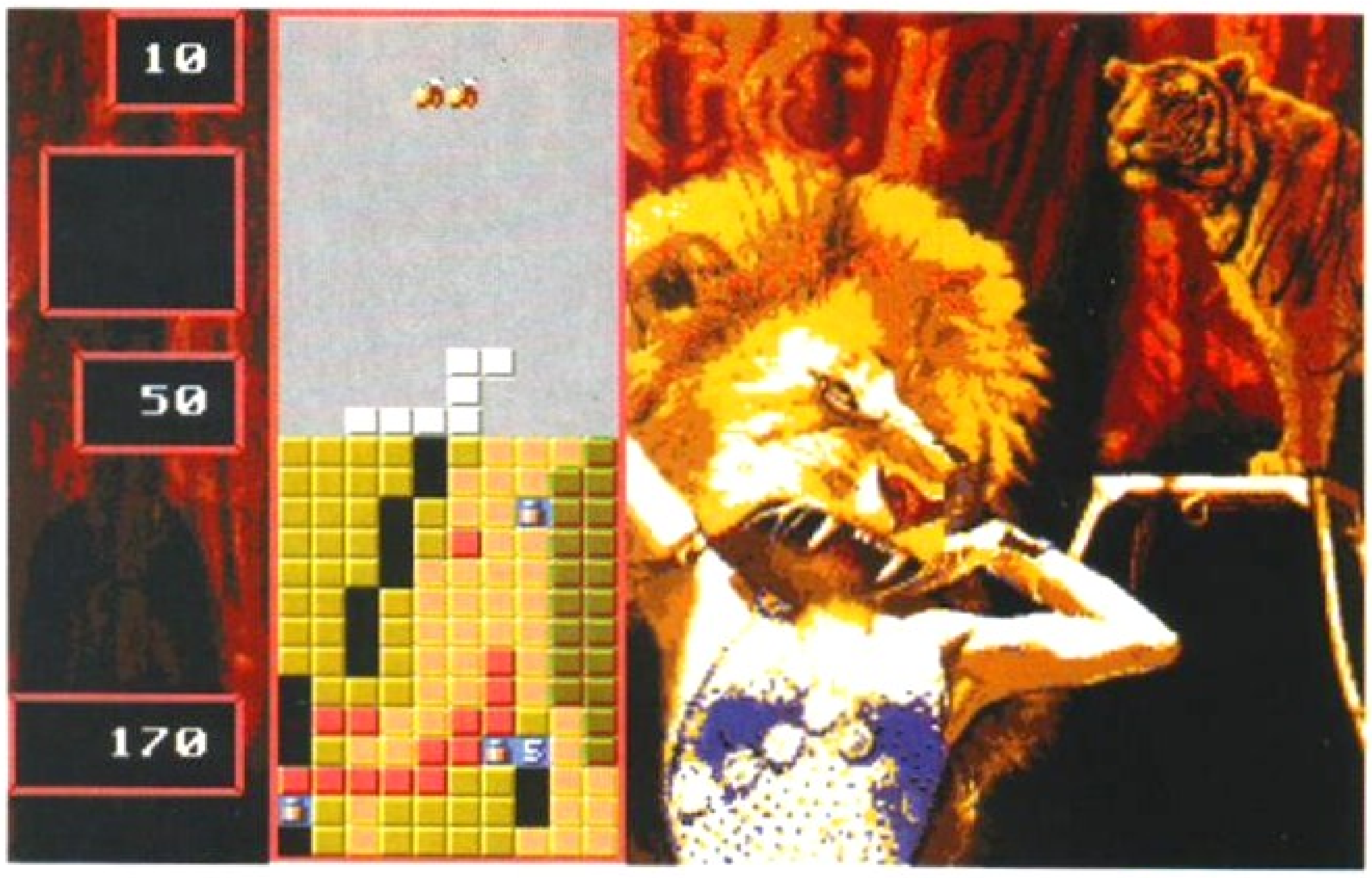
That's not all. Buried in the bottom half are treasures, which, when they are hit with the bombs, do wonderful things, such as clear entire lines, or turn the next piece into a bomb, or add more pieces to your total remaining. You only have a set number of pieces to complete each level with – use them all up and it's sadly back to the options screen with the attractive picture of the tiger and of course the wibbly music.

There are other complications if you want them. You can impose a time limit on yourself if you're stupid, or play with someone else in cooperative mode (the pit gets wider and two pieces fall at the same time) or in competitive mode (lose your friends the easy way). There's also a rather ambitious, but pointless, head-to-head mode, whereby two Amigas are linked and the players compete against each other for the best score.



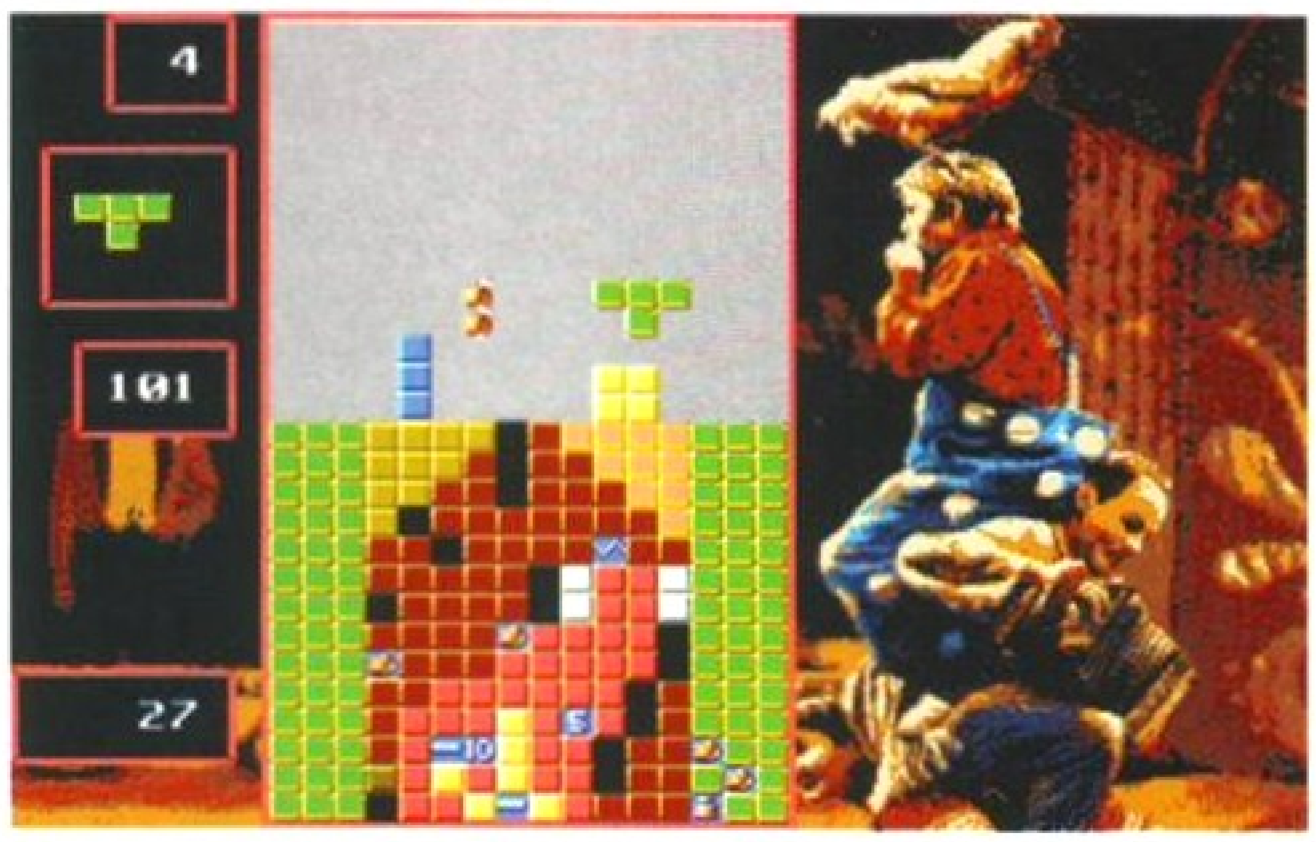
Super Tetris at its most basic, one player against a multitude of colourful shapes and off-putting backgrounds (based around the Russian Circus, home of the famous Tetris Brothers – not).

Oh, look this is just silly. There's no way you can move the pieces fast enough on level 10. Wild Thing! This is the feline equivalent to Rowntree's Lion Bars.



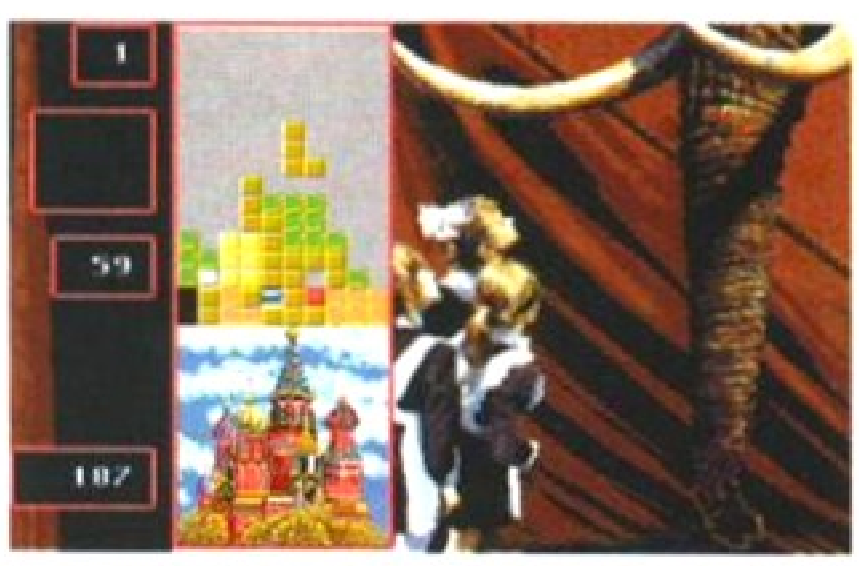






Kids! Throw a *Super Tetris* party! Invite a young friend round, sedate him heavily and then persuade him to spend an hour or two fitting coloured shapes into holes! It's a riot!

The point where it all starts going horribly wrong. The hole on the left has just been blocked up by a panicky move, meaning another line will have to be cleared to get some bombs to open up the gap again. Hrrumph, as they say.



Let's be totally honest here, just for one moment. The original *Tetris* game got (whispers) just a little bit boring after a few intensive plays, didn't it? This however goes some way towards rectifying that. Just dividing the pit up into two makes the game almost twice as hard – every line that you complete in the top half does nothing at all towards finishing the level. The bombs are an absolute godsend for clearing up all of your unforced errors and when they're used in conjunction with the treasures the game is turned into something completely different.

Two packets of Tetris please

You're still going to get bored after prolonged play, though, unless this sort of intensive and intuitive mind-work is your bag. It's unlikely that even the best player could survive for more than 20 seconds on levels eight and upwards, so the game effectively loses a couple of difficulty levels.

Generally it's a thumbs up to Spectrum Holobyte for turning what was really an average puzzle game into something with a little more longevity. Is it Super? Nah. It is Quite Good. That's more like it.

Ed Ricketts

TETRIS THROUGH THE AGES

So just what is it about this *Tetris* phenomenon that makes it so popular, then? It's a simple idea: seven differently-shaped pieces fall one at a time and at random from the top of a pit, and pile up at the bottom. As they're falling you can rotate and move them left or right so they slot into the gaps in the other pieces. When a complete line is formed across the pit, the line disappears and all the other pieces drop down. The idea is to keep forming lines for as long as possible. When the pieces pile up so much they touch the top of the pit, it's game over (man). On later levels the pieces fall more quickly.

Dull, huh? Apparently not. When the game first appeared from Russia three or four years ago, many people collectively threw up their hands, exclaimed "Good grief, that really does look good and no mistake," and remortgaged their houses to rush off and buy as many copies as they could. Since then it's become a cult in the computer game world. Heck, even the Macintosh has a version.

Super Tetris
MicroProse ■ £24.99

- Some purists might gag at what's been done, but the additions are definitely for the best.
- If you don't like the ordinary version this might be for you. There's far more variety...
- ...although more could have been made of the 'treasures'.
- Backdrops are pretty but pointless.
- Good in short doses.

Verdict 68%

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If you've ever played G-LOC R360° in the arcades you'll know how great a game this could have been. Unfortunately, it isn't.

G-LOC R360

US Gold ■ £25.99

Trying to convert Sega's all-spinning, all-dancing into-the-screen shoot-em-up for the Amiga is not a task for the faint-hearted. But that's what US Gold have attempted here. You are at the controls of an experimental super-plane, the A8M5 MkII.

Laid before you are 36 difficult missions. So difficult, even the manual describes them as suicidal. They would be easier if the designers of your plane (or the game) had spent less time on the weapon systems and more on making it flyable. If you must play this game, use a mouse rather than a joystick because it allows much more aerial manoeuvrability, and means you will be able to complete missions. The game is transformed under mouse control, and instead of binning it, you'll find yourself wanting to play it two or three times before you put it on the shelf.

G-LOC means loss of consciousness due to G force. If you do actually lose consciousness then it will probably be down to boredom. Avoid like the plague.

Verdict 44%

Marcus Dyson



Smooth scrolling, bright backgrounds, a cute character and a fun intro sequence, Hoi has got everything except playability.

Hoi

Hollyware ■ £25.99

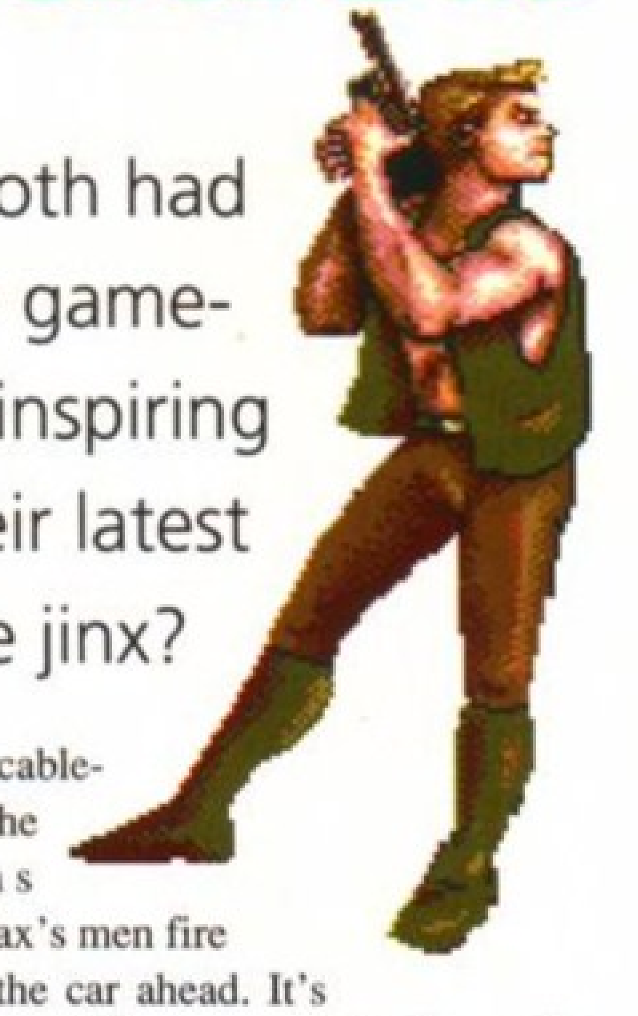
This was written by three young Belgians (the ones who wrote the music package *Mugician* reviewed in *Amiga Format* 19) and it has taken them a lot of effort to get it in to the marketplace. And their time hasn't been wasted, because as platform games go *Hoi* has all the right ingredients: an undeniably cute hero, bright copper backgrounds and very smooth scrolling. But somehow it just fails to produce the addictively playable game it should.

There is a bit of the 'play till you get killed and then start again and remember what to avoid' syndrome to the game. Sometimes you are forced to take a jump into the unknown because the screen doesn't extend far enough for you to see where you're going. The design of the levels is simply not intelligent enough for this to be a truly enjoyable game. The first level is the worst, if you can make it to subsequent levels, then you may find yourself enjoying *Hoi*.

Verdict 72%

Marcus Dyson

Guy Spy and the Crystals of Armageddon



Dragon's Lair and Space Ace both had stunning graphics, but lacked the gameplay that ReadySoft's awe-inspiring animation promised. Can their latest graphical extravaganza break the jinx?

D*ragon's Lair*, but with gameplay. Of course it seems such an obvious concept after those clever Canadians have gone out and put a game behind the stunning graphics and come up with *Guy Spy*. Guy's a cunning lad. No-one would ever think he was a secret agent with a name like that. He's been given the job of saving the world from Von Max, a failed Nazi, who has in his possession a clutch of mysterious crystals. But don't worry because Guy's armed with very sharp reflexes and also a really quite astonishing pair of boots.

Guy Spy is a character that really is under your control. He walks! He skis! He attacks the walking dead with scimitars! And what's more, his size-15 boots flap around comically at the same time.



Ha! Fiendish Von Max, prepare to meet your doom. Not even the fabled dangly woman of myth will be able to stop my righteous wrath.

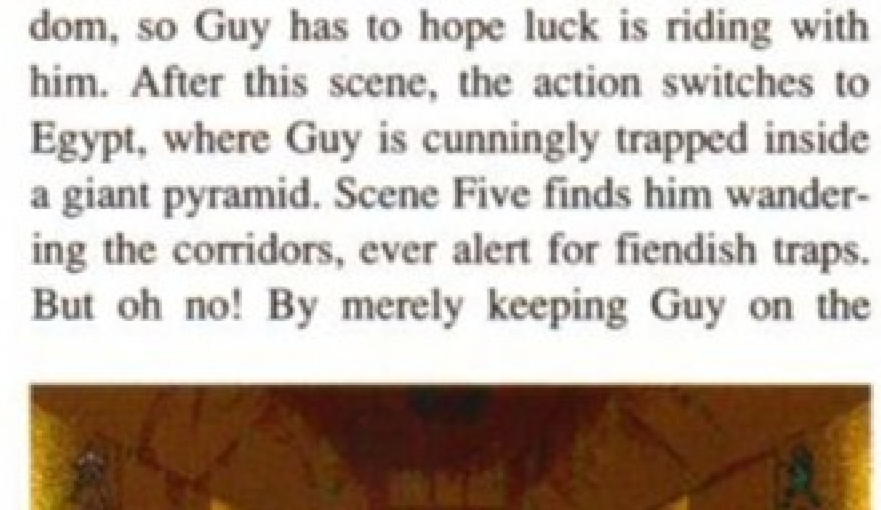
The game is divided into 13 stages, tracing Guy's journey around the world as he pursues the portly Von Max. The presentation is, as you'd expect, excellent. The graphics and animation are great, and although the pipey music quickly becomes irritating, there are some top-notch sampled effects. As for the game itself – well, sadly it seems that Guy Spy is destined to be remembered with slight affection as a Brave Attempt. Rather than make sweeping statements about the game as a whole, I'll take you through the various stages and point out once again why a game like this has failed to come up with the goods.

This is the game

Stage one finds Guy pinned down at a train station by a squad of Von Max's goons. The joystick controls Guy's gunsight as it wobbles around the screen, with diagonal movement causing the super agent to leg it to avoid the opposition's bullets. But oh no! By keeping the gunsight in the corners of the screen, you can blast every goon as he runs on to the platform. Scene two is, erm, actually rather good. Guy rides a cable-car across the mountains while Von Max's men fire at him from the car ahead. It's very fast and great fun as you dodge from window to window, occasionally stopping to reload before beavering over to the opposite side of the car and then blazing away because one of the villains is about to toss a stick of dynamite at you. Not too much of a challenge but highly enjoyable.

Scene Three takes place in a Swiss mountain cabin, where Von Max releases the unsurprisingly huge Olga to finish off our hero. Guy has to dodge Olga's blows and try to wrongfoot her so he can slip past. But oh no! By running up to the cabin door while Olga is making her entrance, Guy can escape straight away.

Scene Four finds Guy skiing down the mountain. Various obstacles loom up out of the mists, and Guy has to swerve to avoid them. But oh no! The obstacles appear at random, so Guy has to hope luck is riding with him. After this scene, the action switches to Egypt, where Guy is cunningly trapped inside a giant pyramid. Scene Five finds him wandering the corridors, ever alert for fiendish traps. But oh no! By merely keeping Guy on the



Guy is a pretty athletic dude. It's just a pity that the controls are so sluggish. You have to predict what's coming up next so there's time to move.



The gentleman in the feathers has asked if Guy can direct him to the bus station, and Guy's impulsively shot him in the throat. Another triumph for international co-operation and understanding.

move at all times, you avoid every single one of the blessed things.

Halfway through the game, and scene six finds Guy battling the sinister god Ramah-Kul. Everyone's favourite secret agent has to pick up swords and throw them at the god while avoiding the blasts of energy that he calls down from above. But oh no! The blasts are directed at Guy's last position in the room, so all you have to do is, again, keep him moving. Seven, eight and nine are more fight scenes. But oh no! By keeping the fire button pressed you defeat your opponents with ease. Scene nine is another fight, this time on a log high above a raging river, with – yes! – more easy pappy opponents. To beat the level you have to cross the log. Cunningly, the instructions omit this slightly important piece of information.



Tragically, Guy's fencing skills prove unequal to the task of disposing of a bandaged dead guy. These death scenes are better than the game.

It's enough to make a roach retch

So, after about an hour's play we're on scene eleven. To make up for the embarrassing simplicity of the previous levels, this one's stupendously difficult. Guy has to run through a forest, jumping over tiger traps while loosing arrows at the unfriendly natives. Unfortunately it takes far too long to fire an arrow, so you have to forget that and make your way along by continuously edging forwards and ducking, then jumping over the pits when there's a clear spot. Even more unfortunate is that some of the villains fire impossible-to-see darts rather than hefty spears, so you have to hope that Guy's luck is holding up again. But worst of all is that the scene seems to go on forever. It simply refuses to end.

After several agonising attempts, I gave it up and had a nice relaxing game of *The Perfect General* instead, so I'm afraid I don't know what the final two scenes are like. They could be extremely good, but somehow I doubt it.

Well, that's about the size of it. I could harp on about the interminable animated intro sequences that you can't skip, or the save-game option which stores a grand total of one position on a disk but I think it best to let the whole thing slip quietly by. Never mind Readysoft – it was a Brave Attempt (he said with slight affection).

John Pillar

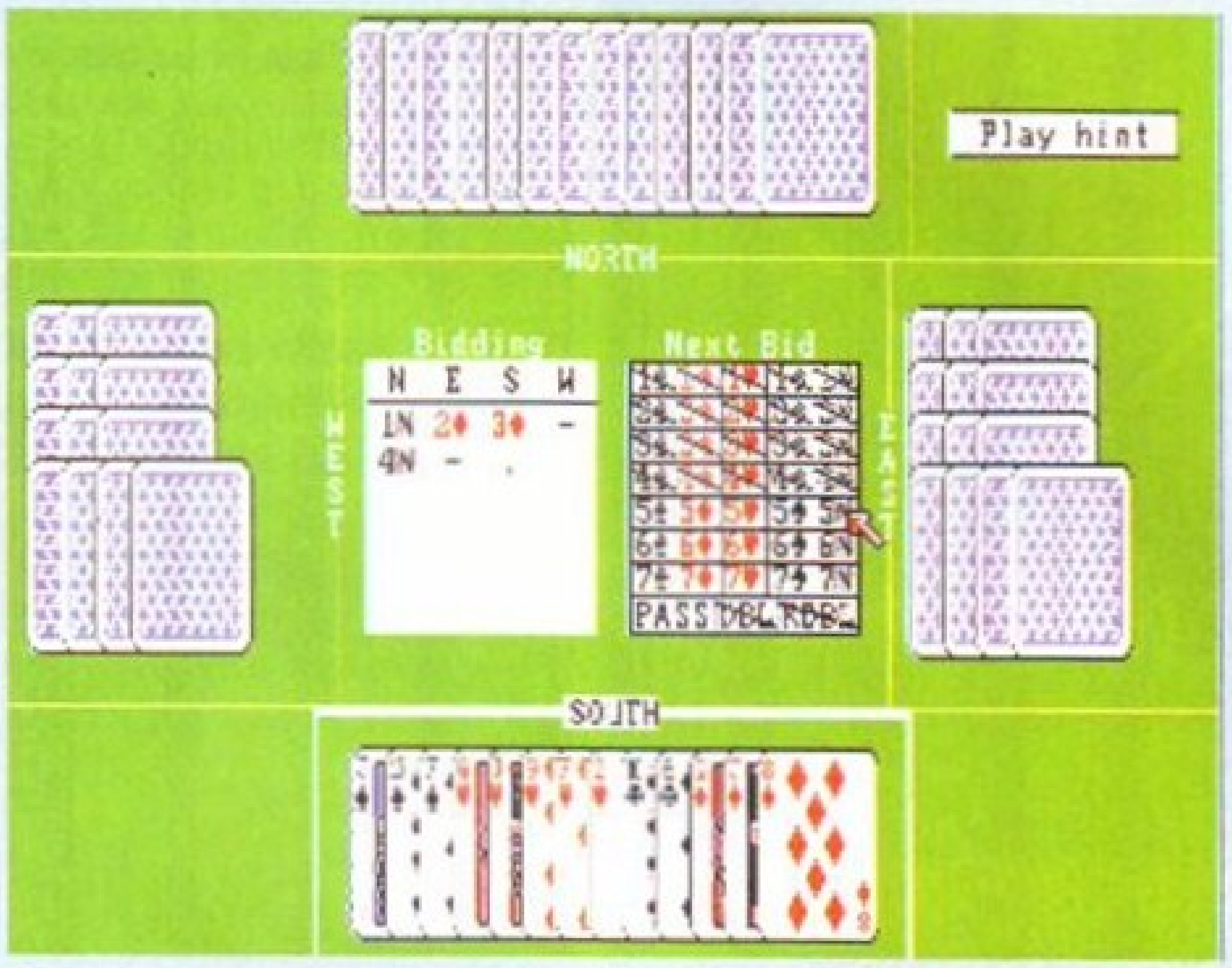


You don't fool me, sinister thralls of Nazism. That beautifully choreographed two-step is merely a veil to obscure your true intentions.

Guy Spy
Readysoft ■ £29.99

- It looks and sounds great. The samples are particularly snazzy, and while Guy is a suspiciously Dirk the Daring-like character, his animation is a real hoot.
- The cable-car bit is excellent. It's a bit like taking all the good points of *Operation Wolf* and compressing them into one compact and bijou package.
- Erm, Guy's boots are highly amusing.
- But the rest of it is a complete non-starter.

Verdict **48%**



The only screen where Omar doesn't make snide comments about your playing style is the bidding screen. And the silence is golden!

Omar Sharif's Bridge

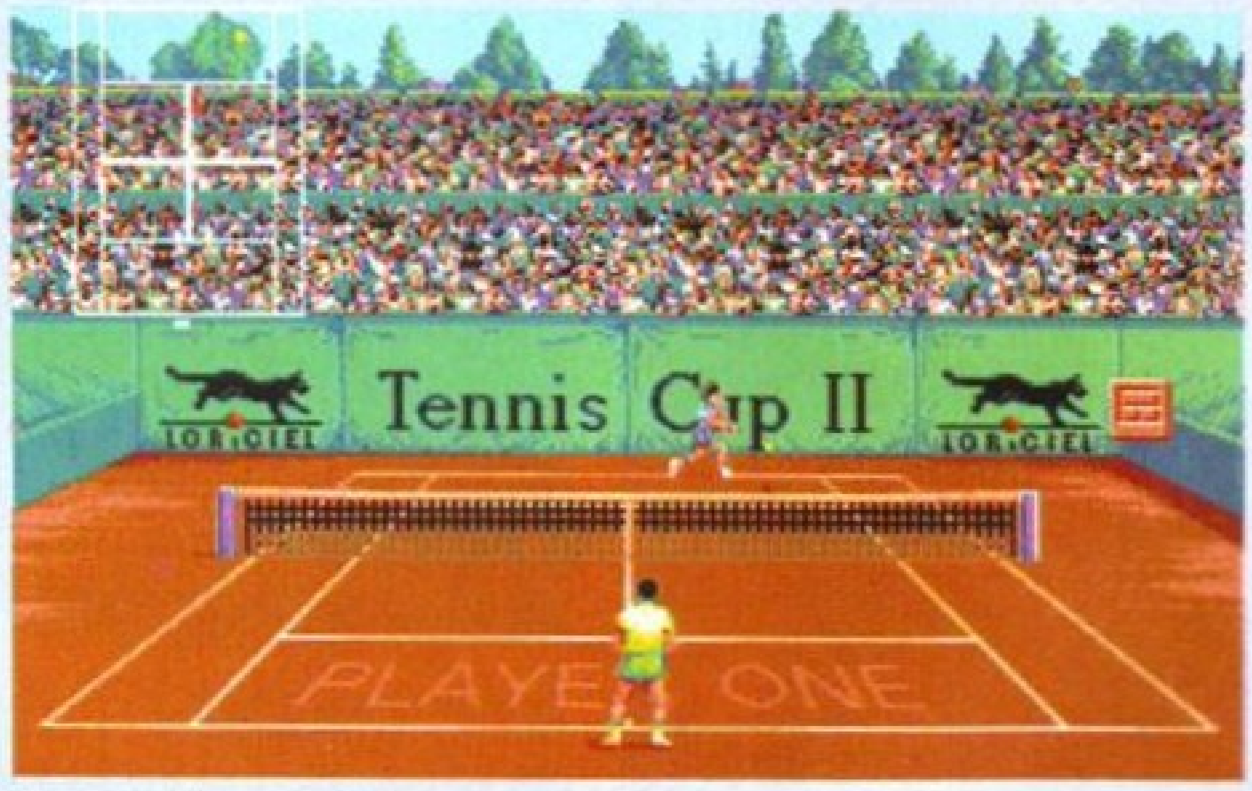
Oxford Softworks ■ £34.99

The high-society card game on the Amiga, with the ultimate licence-deal: Omar Sharif. But this bridge game is not aimed at beginners – there's not enough detail in the manual to learn from scratch. If you're a bridge player, you may find it useful if you can't get three other players together. It could also improve your bridge because you can drop out of the hands where you aren't the declarer. Consequently you can play a lot of hands in one sitting and learn from them all.

The Amiga plays any number of the other hands. The in-game options are good, but there's not enough variety in the bidding to make it superb. Plus the computer is slow to think and it sometimes plays like a real fool.

Chris Anderson

Verdict **58%**



"And a brilliant forecourt smash-n-grab topspin lob from, er... the man in the disgusting green and turquoise shorts."

Tennis Cup 2

Loriciel ■ 25.99

Ohmigosh! Quick, hide! It's another tennis game!!! This offering is a reworking of their 1990 release (surprisingly titled *Tennis Cup*). All the best features are retained – sampled spot effects, digitised speech for scoring, and split-screen mode for two players, but some new ones have been added such as better character animation and more user-friendly options.

The game comes on two disks which must be constantly swapped even if you have two disk drives. This process is tedious, and spoils the otherwise excellent presentation. I thought programmers would have learned by now that Amiga users HATE UNNECESSARY DISK SWAPPING! There, I've said it.

There are a number of tennis games available on the Amiga and most of them are good; *Tennis Cup 2* is an excellent addition to the list. It's great fun to play, especially in two-player mode with a split screen, and it has a large variety of options. However, if you already own any self-respecting tennis game, then this one will probably not be enough of an improvement to make you part with the necessaries.

Andy Nuttall

Verdict **80%**

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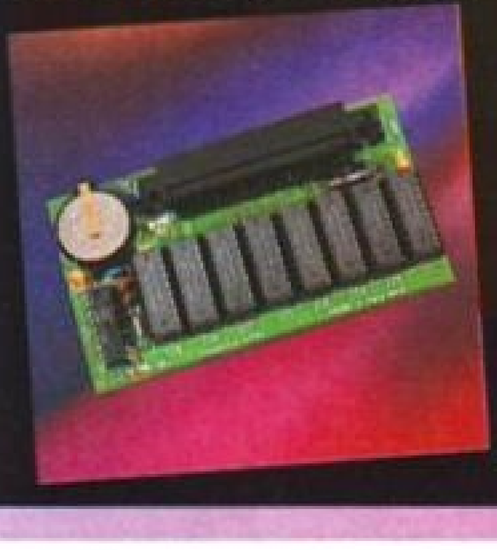
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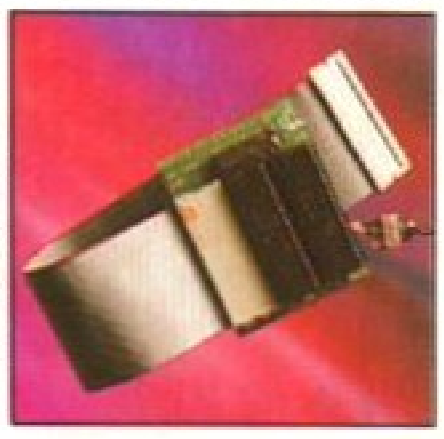
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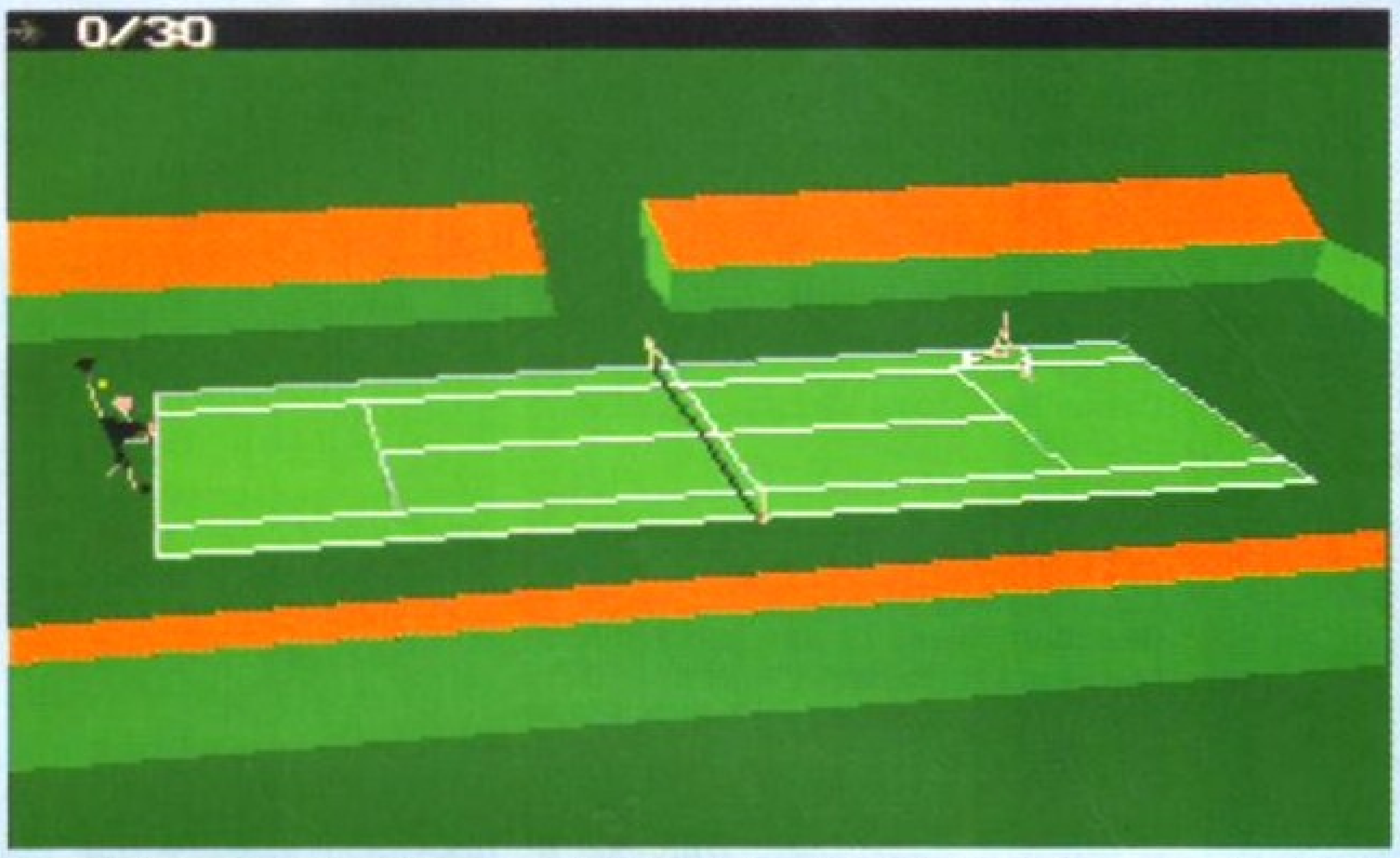
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Cheap 'n' Cheerful



Here we demonstrate the self-service tennis ball. It throws itself in the air, bounces automatically off the racket and flies into any unprotected part of your opponent's anatomy.

International 3D Tennis

GBH ■ £7.99

Wimbledon finished ages ago. The dishy bloke won, and now it's all forgotten. It's probably raining outside right now, too (go and look). So who wants a tennis game? Well for £7.99 you might. This one has a certain realism that points to the fact that the programmers concentrated very hard on how tennis players actually move before writing the code. So the little wire-frame fellows actually behave very accurately as they rush around.

But this accuracy can get slightly annoying. The players have such momentum that it's tough to whack them around the court with anything like the speed you're after. You're supposed to play tactically, and be aware that you've got to get into position early, but I wanted the men to move like lightning. This is my 'fault' though (oh – a tennis gag). The only real criticism is that the court (and everything on it) is a little small.

But *International 3D Tennis* is smooth and playable, once you've mastered the controls and weight. Two-player mode is best, and by the end of a tough rally, you really have to work because there's no way you're going to let your chum from over the road win.

Verdict 83%



Rijkaard, Van Basten, and Gullit all rush towards the goal. But England captain Charles 'Charlie' Charles wins back the ball as if it was stuck to his foot.

Emlyn Hughes International Soccer

Touchdown ■ £9.99

On dark, moonless nights, they say that the ghost of Emlyn Hughes still treads the pitch at Elland Road. Dead weird, that, because he used to play at Anfield. Anyway, this game isn't at all like his stupid triv' quiz game. No, in fact it's rather good. It's a sideways-looker, with all the moves and most of the speed that you and I have come to expect of footie games (experts that we are).

There are loads of international teams, all with different skill levels, and the control is easier than *Kick Off*. This makes it more fun initially, but might lessen its long-term playability. Graphics are OK and the players make reasonable attempts to behave like simulations of proper human beings (ie they do get into pass-receiving positions when they've got the chance). It's not quite as good as *Kick Off*, but fans of the genre (I love saying that) might be glad to have it because it is another playable football game.

Verdict 77%



Seymour constantly finds that being a blob of radioactive jelly isn't enough to get him into Hollywood. And the chances of a producer with a big part wanting to sleep with him look decidedly minimal.

Seymour goes to Hollywood

CodeMasters ■ £7.99

Remember that beautifully written review of *The Cartoon Collection* in C 'n' C last month? Yes, one of the games featured on that compilation has cropped up once more. Seymour is the name, and being goofy and 'amusing' is the game.

You move the albino mutant lardball around what purports to be Hollywood, trying to solve various puzzles in turn. They aren't that difficult, and, as you'll note from the bright, cheerful graphics (in which everything has thin black lines around it), the game is a bit of fun aimed at the pretty-damn young with a few sovs burning holes in their pockets. There's a large playing area, and even young players won't remain stumped by the puzzles for long (well, total babies might), so there's a fair bit of entertainment value here.

But hold fast for a mo. *The Cartoon Collection* is £24.99, with five games included (all pretty good quality) and this is £7.99 on its own. If you want it, scrounge the extra dosh and buy the compilation. It's an economy of scale, you see. JM Keynes was absolutely right.

Verdict 77%



"Er, hello! Is anyone in? Jane? It's just that the garage door was open and I couldn't help but come in and admire your *beauuutiful* new spacecraft. French, is it? Oh, Italian. Très chic, dearie."

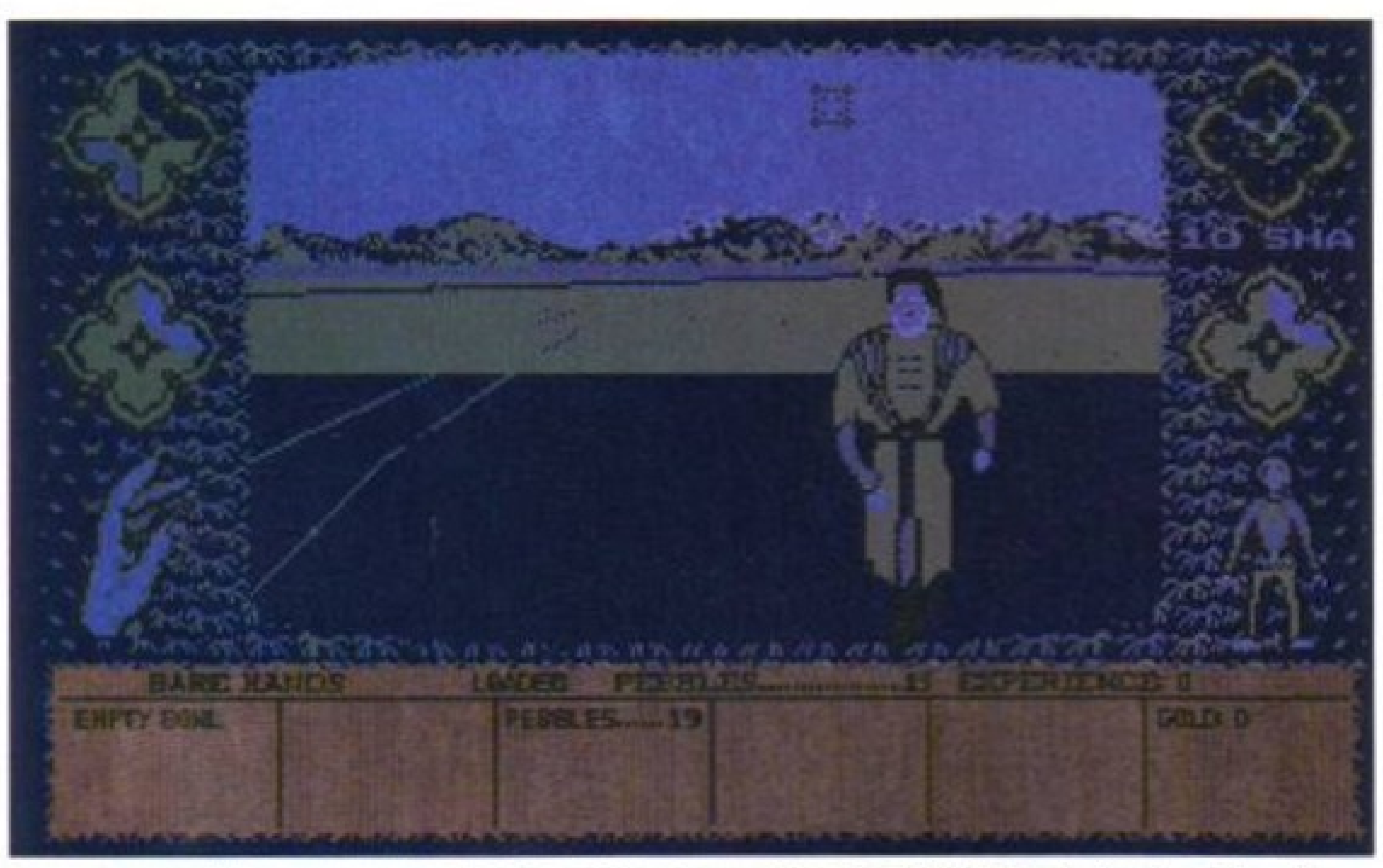
BSS Jane Seymour

GBH ■ £7.99

Move around a sci-fi world using the tried-and-trusted *Eye of the Beholder* method. Shoot things, pick up other things and try to mend various spaceships. But before you do get stuck into Ms Seymour (stop sniggering – it's the spaceship's name), you've got to ask yourself whether you're enough of a fan to stay with it. There are 4,000 rooms, umpteen intergalactic vessels to tinker with and millions of microscopic mouse movements in order to do what you want to do.

It's pretty, though it's lacking in atmosphere, and your brain won't have to work too hard once you've sorted out what's going on. But it doesn't have the edge which would make it unputdownable (if you pick up your Amiga when playing games). Remember that for £8 you're getting a large sci-fi game, with baddies, weapons and more.

Verdict 75%



My gran used to say to me: "A day without sunshine is night." And, playing *Sleeping Gods Lie* years later, I suddenly understood. The daft old bat was as senile as a goat.

Sleeping Gods Lie

Touchdown ■ £9.99

Aha! Two pounds more than is the norm. What kind of fiendish marketing ploy is this? Anyway, *Sleeping Gods Lie* is a dreadful name for a game, or anything else (apart from a combined church and discount bed centre). It's pure fantasy time once more, as you move your mouse around the screen and watch the view scroll (rather smoothly) around to follow the cursor. You wander in this curious manner along tracks, across deserts and through the lingerie departments of cities.

Various characters crop up, providing you with a little interest, and there are a multitude of doors to open, cupboards to examine and pantries to explore. It's like a speeded-up trip around a *3D Construction Kit* world. The movement system does allow you a fair degree of flexibility, though, and there aren't many rules about where you can and can't go. So if you do buy it, bung away the manual unread and try and work out what's going on without it by wandering everywhere. On second thoughts, don't be so sad.

Verdict 60%

Sim City Module Architecture 1 – Future Cities

Action Sixteen ■ £7.99



Life on the moon is boring. There's no atmos- (*Don't use that gag – Ed.*)

OK, so you've got a thriving metropolis. Bridges, fire stations and an abundance of parkland nestles cosily with rapid transport systems and expensive waterfront developments and leaky nuclear power plants.

All in all, you've got the hang of *Sim City*. And it's only just possible that you're getting slightly bored with it. After all, you've seen one airport and sports stadium and you've seen them all. But that's where these new architecture modules come in. Just load 'em up and instantly you've got a whole new city to look at. Every unit in it is ultimately the same, so there are police stations, power stations and all the other gubbins, but the names have been changed, and of course it all looks vastly different.

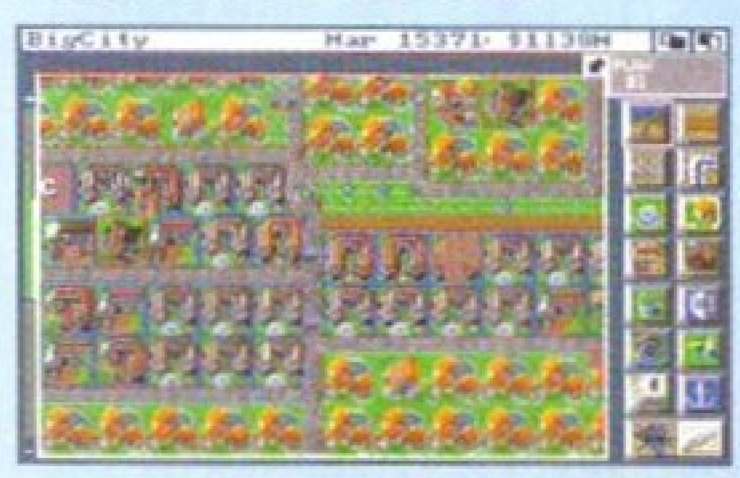
The Future Cities include all sorts of excellent weirdness for you to explore. There's Gotham City (which does indeed look a bit like the new sets in the *Batman Returns* film), there's a Moonbase (which looks like a sort of base on the moon) and there's a cyberpunk Manhattan.

All in all, the future cities are well thought out and look like they could take the style of the game well into the next century, as they say in advertising land.

Verdict 78%

Sim City Module Architecture 2 – Ancient Cities

Action Sixteen ■ £7.99



"Your lordship! The peasants are revolting." (*Forget this poor joke too – Ed.*)

No, no. You don't want any of that futuristic rubbish. Get your head round some historical settlements with the *Ancient Cities* module. You can develop the Wild West, with its tumbleweeds, earthquakes and, er, tumbling weeds. Or what about medieval Europe? Build houses of wood, pack them together, and chuck a Swan Vesta in the middle of it. Minutes of fun are guaranteed.

The thing is, none of the architecture modules actually affect the gameplay at all. A power station in the original game becomes a water wheel in the medieval module and an electro-gravity system in the moonbase. But the power unit performs exactly the same in each, so once you can beat *Sim City*, you can beat it with any of the modules loaded as well.

Verdict 78%

Sim City Terrain Editor

Action Sixteen ■ £7.99



Before your cities spring up, why not alter the very earth on which they sit?

Ever wondered how those wacky riverside landscapes are produced in *Sim City*? Ever lain awake at night, puzzling over the creation of those thin little islands that almost reach the mainland, but not quite?

No, neither have I. But there have been occasions when I've wanted to design my own maps. I'd go into fits of swearing because a terrain editor wasn't available. That is until now. The *Sim City Terrain Editor* is a simple program which gives you a blank desert and the option to bung trees, rivers and channels on to it. Once you've created your Utopic paradisiacal Eden, you can save it, load it into the game proper and cover it with smog-belching factories and mass-transport systems. Of course, it's possible to load in the different architecture modules as well.

Overall, this is a minor program which won't change your life. But if you're a big *Sim City* fan, you could have some fun.

Verdict 75%

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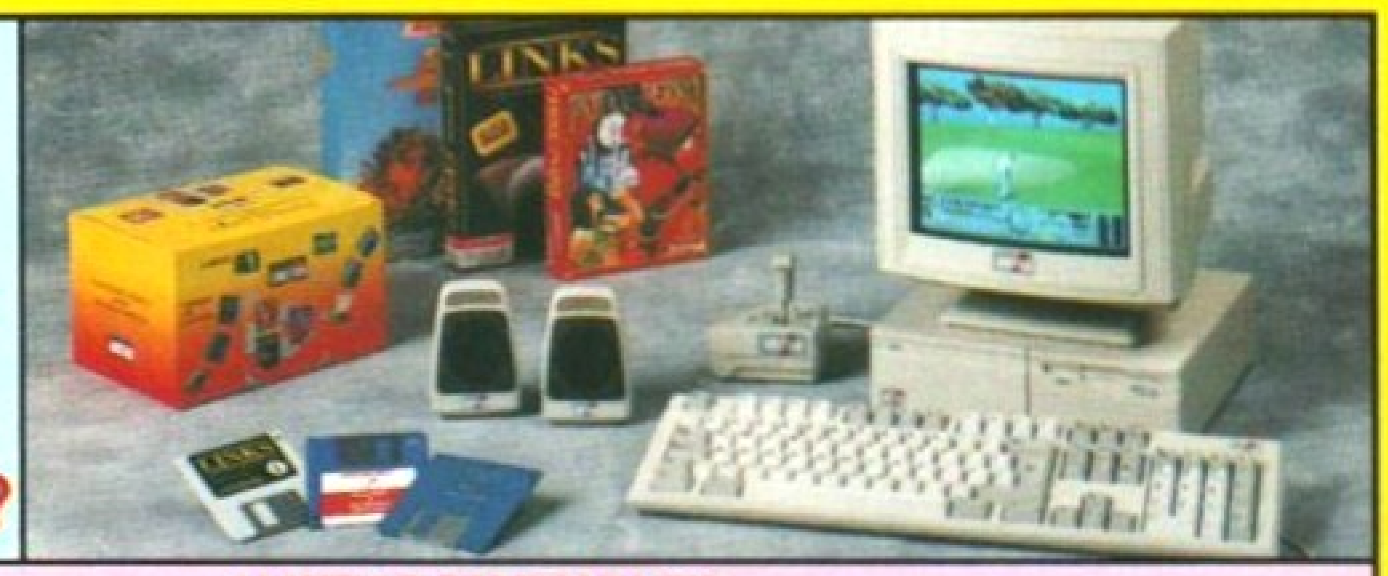
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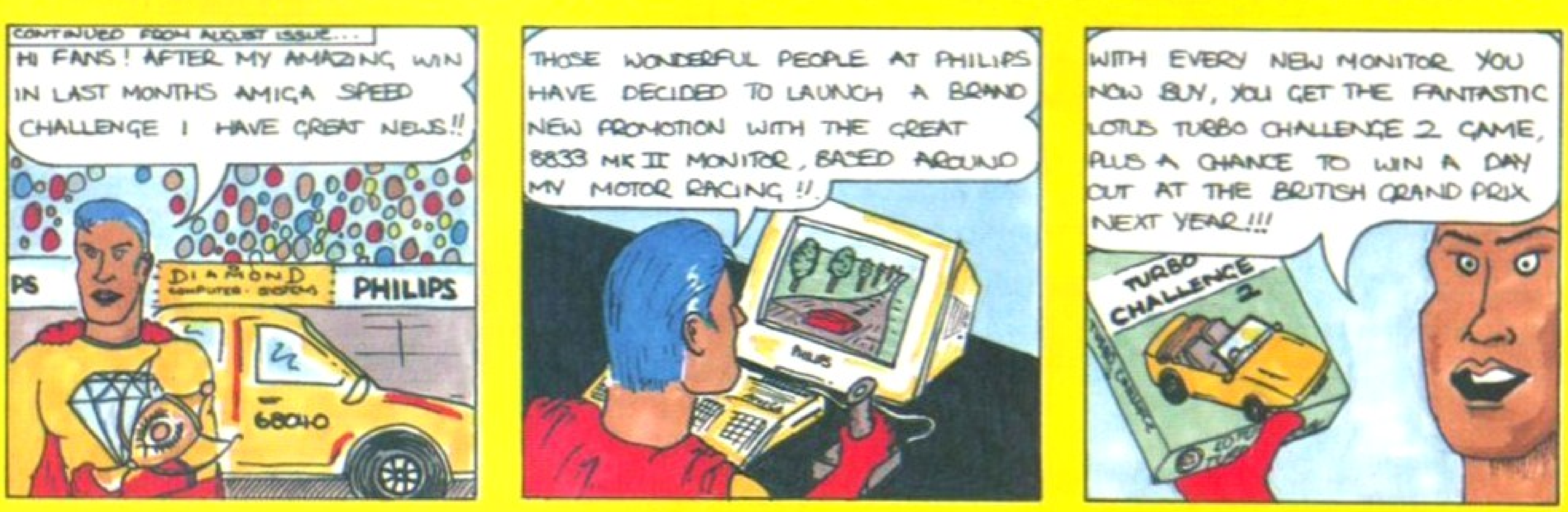
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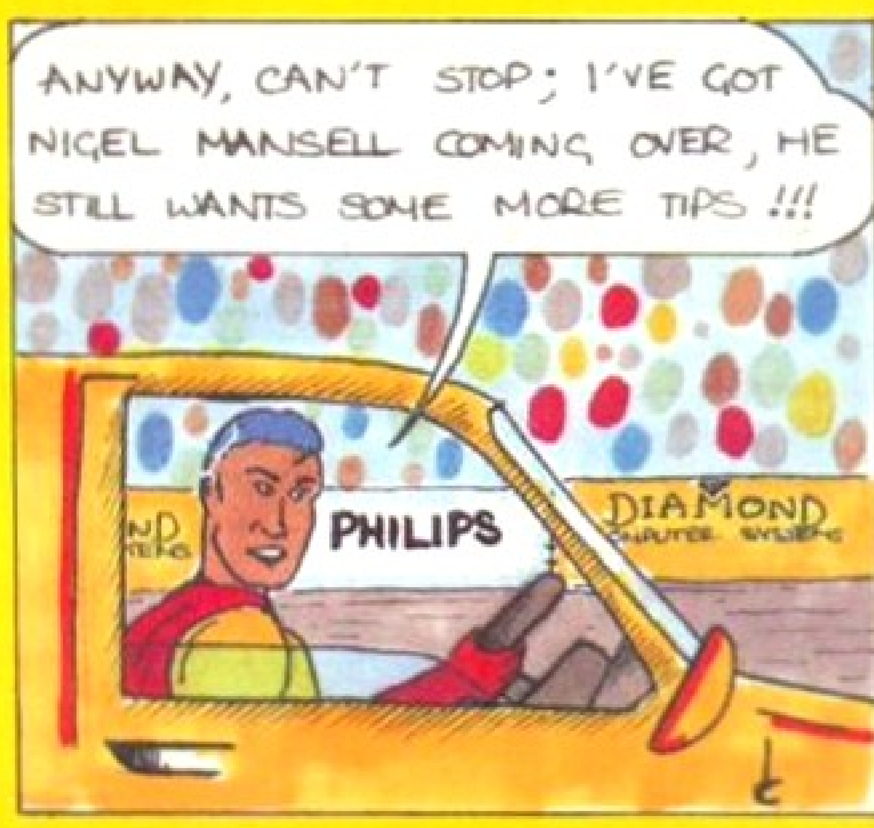
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Personal Computer World July 1992

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Chart busters

Tish and pish to your old games and dusty compilations! What we have here are the very latest chart-topping hits, busted wide open so you can go racing through them in seconds.



Epic

Don't buy it. It's a really, really awful game. No, we don't really mean that. What we mean is, try typing the following messages in for a bit of a leg up: AURIGA, CEPHEUS, APUS, MUSCA, PYXIS, CETUS, FORNAX, CAELUM, and CORVUS. And the Enter key has a few uses too: refuel, repair shields, and boost your weapons up to massive 99 shots. Handy on level five, this is!



The Secret of Monkey Island 2

LucasFilm's superb adventure gets the full treatment in this month's Game Busters (well, it's almost full, anyway). Check out the first half of the full solution on these very pages. We'll bring you the final bit when you've had time to mess around with that lot, OK? These things take time, you know.



Project X

Not a lot of people know this, but there's a secret stage at the end of the first level of Team 17's excellent blaster. Well, if everybody knew it wouldn't be a secret. Just to blow the whole mystery wide open, here's where to find it: when you get to the first level guardian, fly between its jaws and into its middle. Once you're through, you'll find some more baddies (life's not all roses), but if you kill them all, you get three extra lives.



Fire and Ice

What an awesome platformer this is – one of Andy Braybrook's best, we reckon. If you're having trouble just staying alive, try pressing the left mouse button on the title screen. This simple act can give you infinite lives, a quality which can make a huge difference to your everyday, hum-drum platform-leaping existence.



Jaguar XJ220

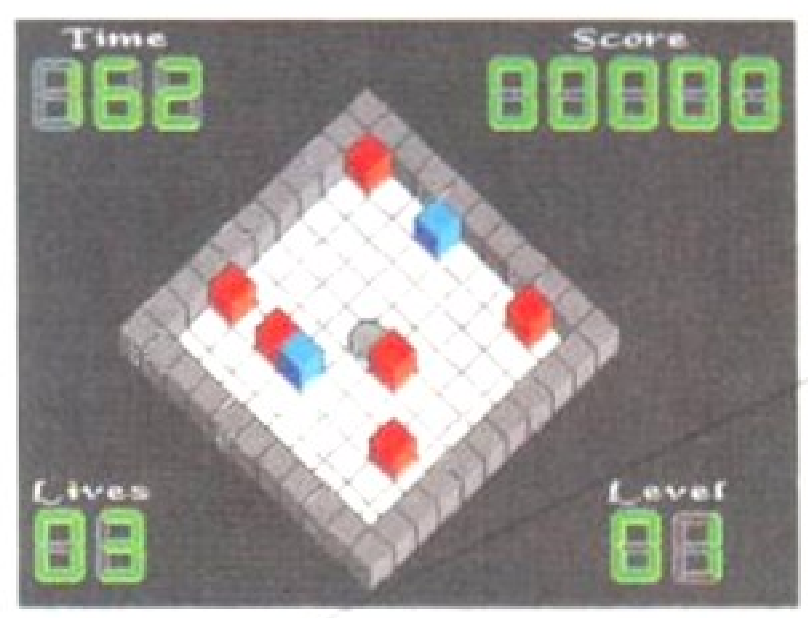
To get a bit of extra speed on the racetrack, you need to do a bit of work on the music selection screen. Press the mode button on the CD player, and then click on the right side of the scan button. Finally click on the eject button. You should find that the whole game runs a lot faster, enabling you do laps in a much shorter time than you could previously. Winning should be easy if you don't hit too many cars.

Game Busters

Don't let your favourite games get you down. Game-junkie **Maff Evans** and his amazing Game Busters are here to save the day with a giant-sized helping of solutions, cheats and pertinent pointers.

INTERLOCK

Amiga Format's brilliant Coverdisk game Interlock had many people hard at it into the early hours of the morning. But don't fret if you're stuck, use one of the passwords below



All the codes for *Amiga Format*'s Coverdisk game. It's almost too good to be true.

2 leveltwo
3 mainwood
4 mandarin
5 wivenhoe
6 garfield
7 startrek
8 religion
9 sunshine
10 industry
11 floating
12 innuendo
13 sapphire
14 headache
15 robotics
16 tpaurage
17 dinosaur
18 category
19 spaceman
20 inspiral
21 universe
22 multivac
23 boasting
24 laxative
25 language

TMH Ellis
Solihull, West Midlands

JAMES POND

This is very similar to the Robocod cheat – and it's equally easy to use and it's just as devastating.

Type in JUNKYARD on the title screen and it will flash. Start the game and press [RETURN] to activate the cheat. You're totally invulnerable, which is signified by a little fairy that follows you around at the start of every level. The following keys also enable you to skip levels.

Level	Key	Level	Key
3	Z	8	N
4	X	9	M
5	C	10	<
6	V	11	>
7	B	12	?

6 on the numeric keypad returns you to level 1.

Press D once to kill baddies, and twice to open exits.

Stephen Passey
Tonbridge, Kent

PARASOL STARS

We had a secret room hint for *Rainbow Islands*' successor last month, but here's an even better cheat.

Type CYNIX during the game and press these keys to achieve the following effects.

C extra credits (very handy if you use the next one too much)

D die (it's best not to use this one too often)

X skip to the next level

B bonus screen

M get all three stars

T go the final stage

G kill all nasties

1-7 skip to that stage

F1-F10 skip to that level

James Malcomson
Wigston, Leicester

Monkey Island 2 – LeChuck's Revenge

What an uproariously amusing adventure. But it's not much fun if you can't get off Scabb Island, is it? If the game's making an ape of you, or the whole monkey business is driving you nuts, here's half of the solution for the hard version to stop you going completely bananas. The lite version is generally considered to be far too easy, so you'll have to do it the hard way.

Part 1 The Largo Embargo



"Yo ho ho and a bottle of rum, if you ain't played Monkey you must be dumb!" (Old Sea Shanty.)

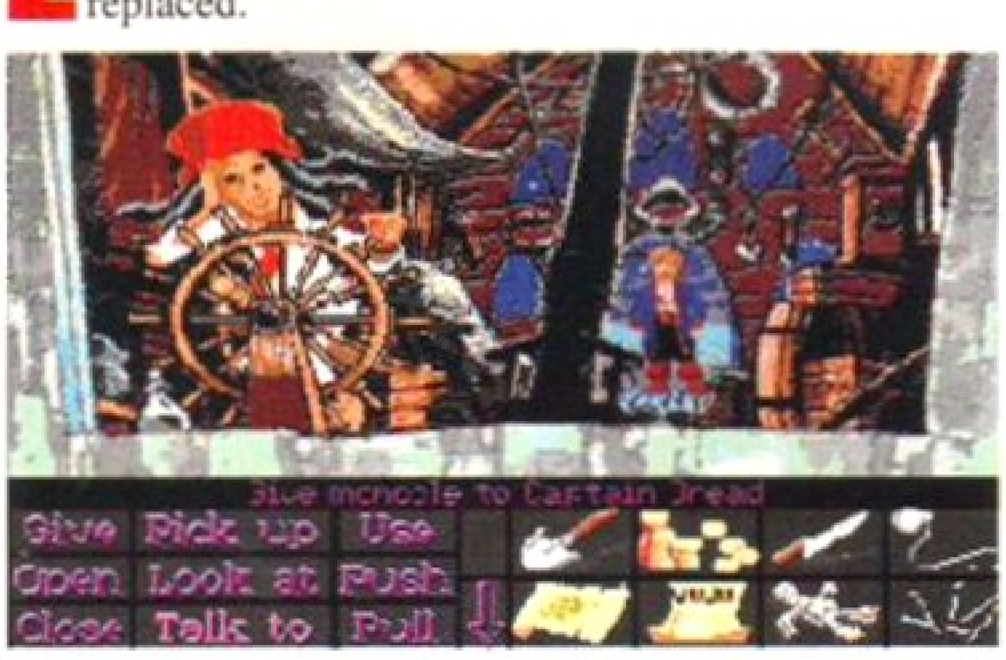
There are three main tasks to be completed on Scabb Island before you can get to any of the other islands.



She's a weirdo, she is, and no mistake. But she can help you show Largo what it's like to be on the sharp end.

1 Largo's embargo must be lifted by making a voodoo doll to scare him off the island. Go to the swamp and talk to the old voodoo lady who will tell you which ingredients are required.

2 Captain Dread's 'lucky eye' necklace must be replaced.



The rastafarian captain can't see a thing without his NHS visual aid. Perhaps you can help him see the light?



If you're ever going to get to deal with LeChuck, you're gonna have to stump up enough cash for your passage.

3 Guybrush must earn enough money to pay for his passage off the island.



It's the same old story: the new boy in town gets roughed up by the big bully in the playground.

OK. Here we are on Scabb Island. Pick up the shovel by the sign and walk over the bridge, where you'll be mugged my Largo. Never mind, easy come, easy go.



Look, if you're prepared to creep in the kitchen window, you must have the bottle to nick a flippin' knife.

Walk to the window, pick up the knife from the table and go back outside. Walk to the door on the left and pick up the pile of paper. When the cartographer rubs his eyes, quickly grab his monocle – this is a replacement for Captain's Dread lost 'lucky eye'.



"Perhaps if the beer in this place was any good, people wouldn't keep gobbing it down the wall."

Walk to the hatch and talk to the bar keeper about his business. Wait for Largo to leave and then use the piece of paper on the glob of spit that's dripping down the wall. Tasty stuff I'm sure, but why do salivatory excretions feature so heavily in *Monkey Island 2*? Walk to the upper deck and go to the ship at the back. Pick up the bucket, but you'll have to persuade the men of low moral fibre to let you take it away. Do this by making them admit that it's not theirs. Walk to the path at the far right of the screen and go to the swamp. Use the bucket on the swamp and it will be filled with oodles of sloppy mud.



"Totally banal, totally ridiculous, I know, but every time I lift my hands over my head my trousers fall down."

Go back to the path, up to the cemetery and then to the graves on the hill, right at the back of the screen. When the screen changes to the one above, you know you're in the right place. Now for a Hammer Horror-style spot of exhumation. Use the shovel on the grave, pick up the bone (and live the experience), and then go back to Woodtick thoroughly shocked at your devilish behaviour. Some people have no respect for the dead.



"The guide book says 'Two star, marine-decor with leaning pillars.' Nothing in 'ere about my alligator at all."

Walk to the ship on the far left and use the knife on the rope that tethers the alligator. When the innkeeper leaves, pick up the alligator's bowl to get the cheese squiggles (his favourite). Walk to the door at the back and go into Largo's room. Pick up the toupee, and use the bucket of mud on the door. Walk to the dressing screen and Largo will walk into the room, trigger the old bucket-of-mud-on-top-of-the-door trap, and he will dash off to the laundry to get his clothes cleaned.



Rummaging through other people's laundry is a hanging offence in some far-off lands. Here, it's compulsory.

Walk to the ship where you got the bucket (Mad Marty's) and wait for Largo to leave. Go back to his room and close the door. On the back of the door you'll find a laundry ticket, which you must take to Mad Marty's ship. Give the ticket to the laundry guy and you'll collect a fetching piece of Largo's attire.



Someday, after global warming and ozone depletion have taken their toll, all our transport will look like this.

Go back to the swamp and use the coffin. Row to the right until you come to a shack. Paddle over to the shack, pick up the string on the table and walk to the right. Ask the voodoo lady about business and continue the conversation about Largo. When she asks for the voodoo ingredients, give her the four objects – the spit, the toupee, the bones and the bra.

When you've got the voodoo doll, go back to Largo's room, quickly use the pins in the voodoo doll, and it's bye bye Largo. That's got rid of one rat, but now we've got to catch one. After talking to the voodoo lady again, go to the beach and pick up the stick. Wander back to Marty's laundry, open the box and use the stick on it. Use the string on the stick and use the cheese squiggles on the box. Walk to the other end of the string and wait for the rat to scurry under the box to munch on the tasty squiggles. Pull the string, open the box and pick up the rat. Squeamish and animal-loving readers should skip the next paragraph, but if you do, you won't be able to complete the game.



If only, eh, if only. You know that sticking pins into a tiny little doll isn't going to work forever, don't you?



"Hang on. I wuz here earlier, weren't I? You lazy burrrr! You ain't moved an inch since I wuz but last 'ere."

Walk to the window and use the rat in the vichyssoise. (We interrupt these *Monkey Island 2* tips for an interesting fact: Marks and Spencers, well known lingerie and food retailer, found that sales of a certain kind of soup increased dramatically when it was renamed from 'Vichyssoise' to 'Potato and Leek'. Vive la difference, as they say in England.) Go back round to the hatch and ask the bar keeper about the stew, and take the job when the chef gets the sack. You'll get a month's wages, but you don't have to do a stroke of work for your money – a bit like working for ***Amiga Format*** really. (Not!) Walk to the window and go to the peninsula at the bottom-left-hand side of the island. Skank over to the houseboat, give the monocle to Captain Dread and charter a ship. You're now ready for the second stage of the adventure. Hurrah.

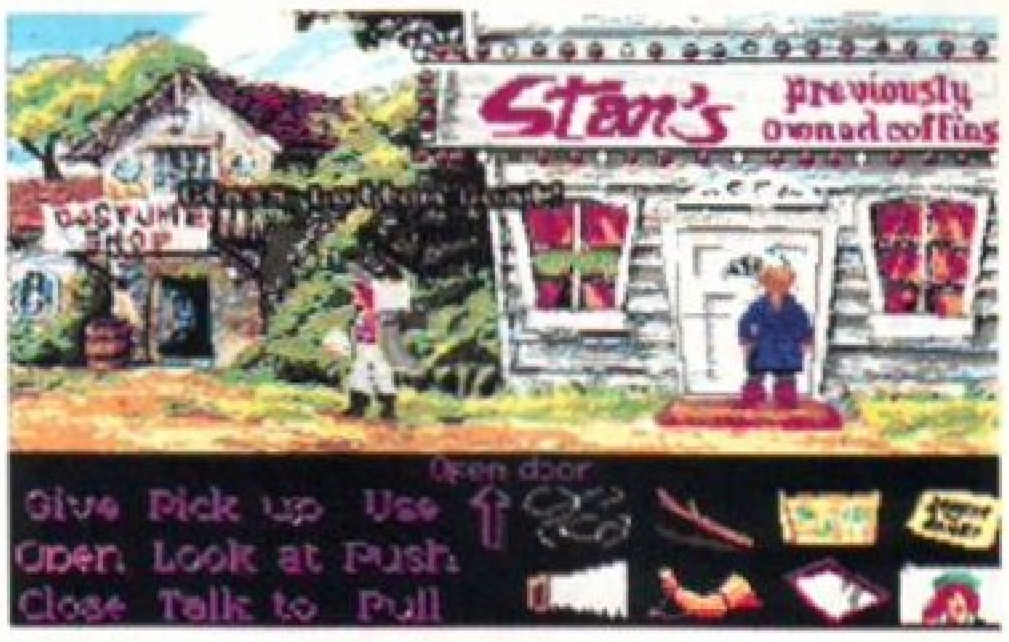
Part 2 The Four Map Pieces



Bet you can't work out what the hell you're supposed to do in the next part. Neither can we so we made it all up!

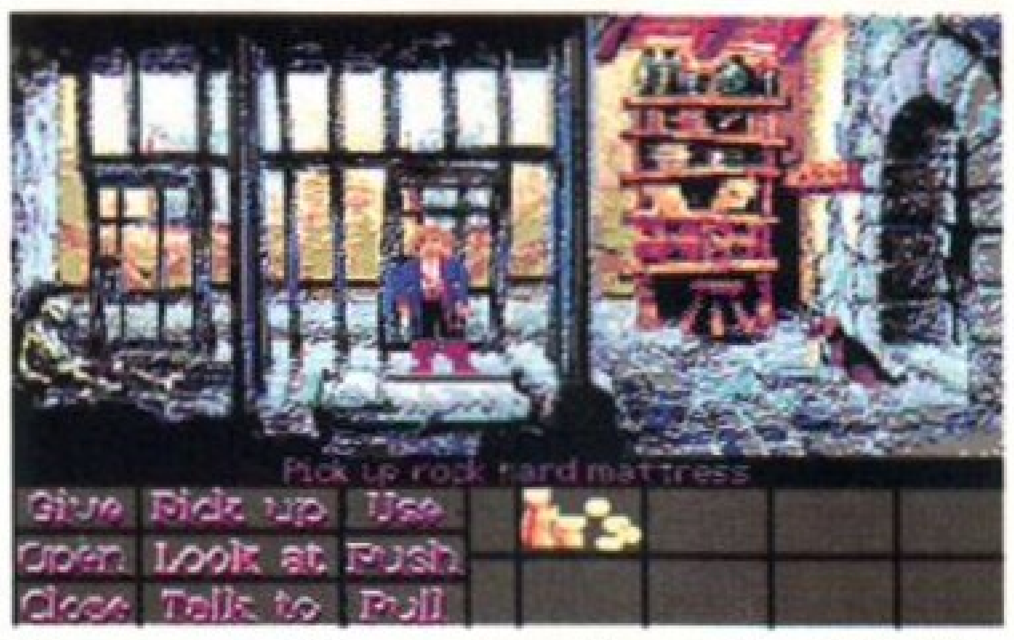
A single solitary objective in Part 2 – collect the four map pieces. No sooner said than you've got an incredibly convoluted set of puzzles on your hands – with a lot of island hopping to boot.

Now you're on part 2, things start to get a bit tougher. Pick up the bag of parrot chow and walk to the door. Ask what your choices of destination are and set sail for Booty Island. Open the door to the left and walk through it, you're now in the Booty Boutique. Buy the 'Beware of parrot' sign, the saw and the ship's horn. Put the parrot chow on the hook to distract the bird's attention and then buy the mirror. Talk to the shopkeeper, who says he'll only part with the map piece in exchange for the figurehead from the Mad Monkey.



"This is Kate, and she's handy for a ride. Er, around the horn that is. I mean, no, er, treasure hunting on a ship."

Go out of the door, walk to the right, talk to the woman in the big hat and ask her for a leaflet. Walk to Stan's door, tell him you have to go and he'll give you a handkerchief. Then it's back to the boat and tell Dread to sail over to Phatt Island.



"Damn, my sexist humour has gotten me in a right old spot. Life's a bitch. No, it's the name of that dog. Life."

Pretty soon you'll find yourself incarcerated, but as Papillon knows, escaping is easy if you put your mind to it. Pick up the rock-hard mattress and the stick. Use the stick on the bone and then pick up the bone. Use the bone on Walt, pick up the small key and use it on the cell door. It's hardly Escape from Alcatraz, but it's still good for a laugh. Open the two envelopes and walk to the door.



"They've got one of these scale models in Canary Wharf, and the bulb in the top's knackered on that one, too."

Use Captain Kate's leaflet on the wanted poster and walk to the library. (Why doesn't Guybrush ever run anywhere?) Open the model lighthouse and take out the lens. Look at the card catalogue, open the draw

Continued overleaf

labelled C/D and find a card called Disasters. Look in the P/Q/R draw and pull out the recipes card. Go to the librarian and ask for 'The Joy of Hex', 'Great Shipwrecks of Our Century', and a third book of your choice. Don't worry about clocking up a massive overdue fine, you won't stick around long enough to pay it.



In a dark, lonely alley like this, the thing *not* to say is "It's a fix! It's a fix!" Unless you want your legs broken

Leave the library and walk to the front alley. When the man leaves, follow him, open the slot on the door and ask for the next number. The answer is the number of fingers the man holds up first. Go back to the alley and ask the man for a game. Bet on the number you were told and then ask for the party invitation.



What kind of a place is this? Gurgling noises coming from upstairs and a bloke wearing a potty on his head.

Go to Governor Phatt's mansion and talk to the guard. When you get a chance, tell him there's a fire in the kitchen and walk to the stairs. Swap the third book you picked up at the library with the one on the bed and return to Dread's ship. Set sail for Scabb Island.



Knives are easy to nick in this game, but hammers are a darn sight more difficult. You gotta get him outta here!

When you get there, walk to the hatch and talk to the bar keeper. Ask for some grog and give him your library card. Buy all three drinks and use the yellow drink on the blue drink. Use the crazy straw on the green drink, use the banana on the metronome and pick up Jojo. (It wasn't quite like this in *Cocktail* was it?) Go to the men of low moral fibre and saw off the guy's wooden leg. Walk to the door by the toll bridge and pick up the hammer and nails – the woodcutter is tending the poor chap who's leg you amputated. Back to Booty Island for more fun and frolics.



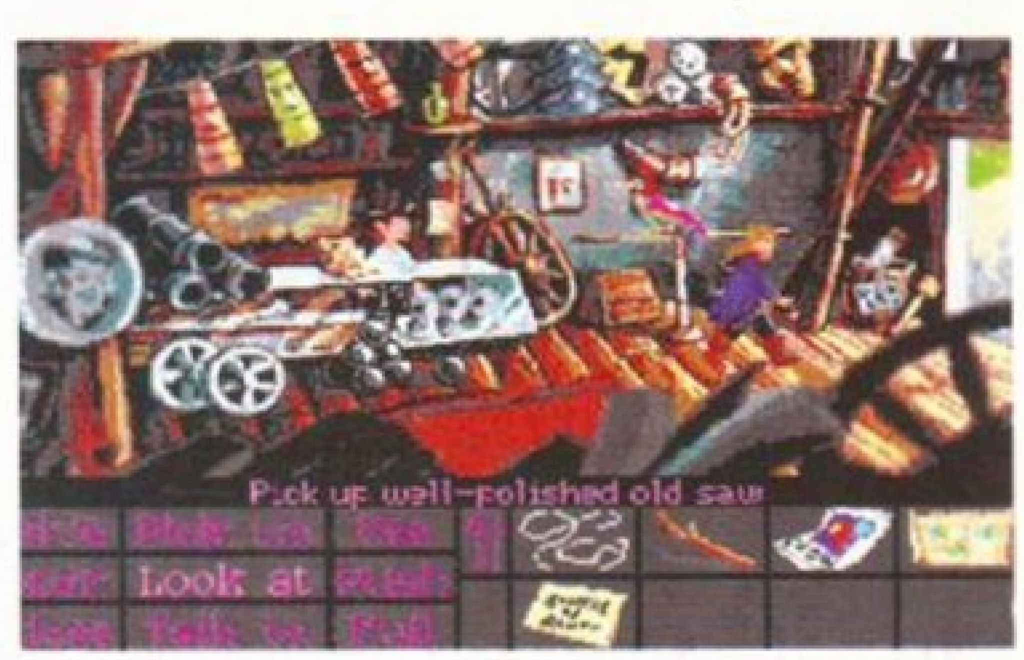
"Typical! In all the bars in all the towns in all the islands, I have to pick up a flippin' cross-dressing lizard."

Go to the costume shop, give the invitation to the shopkeeper and pick up the dress. Go to Stan's and ask about a used coffin. When he gets in one, close it and use the nails on it. Pick up the crypt key, which is on the board at the back of the shop, and then leave and walk to the path on the right.



"When the wind blows, the cradle will rock, and your gob will fly into that old geezer's smock." (Old Rhyme)

Join the spitting contest and use the ship's horn. When the spitmaster walks off, pick up the flags. Use the crazy straw on the green drink and walk to the fault line. You'll need to have two goes at spitting. The first doesn't really matter, but the second time, a winning spit should go something along the lines of 'Swish Swish Hooooooook Chwwwwwwk Ptooie'.



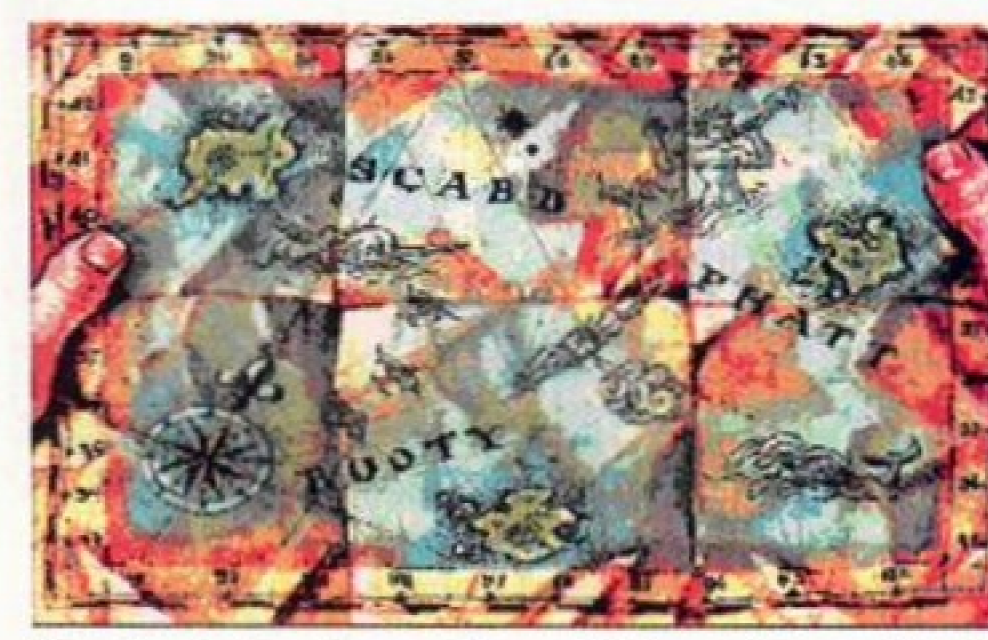
He's cracked, this bloke. He'll buy any old junk for five quid and expect to be able to flog it for 10. Pillock!

Go back to the antique shop, give the dealer your plaque and persuade him to buy it. You'll probably have to work your way through a load of old hogwash to make him want the junk you're offering. If your patter is good enough, he'll pay you 6,000 pieces o' eight. Leave the shop and look at the *Great Shipwrecks* book which you borrowed form the library. Remember the coordinates of the sunken galleon and then go and ask Captain Kate if you can charter a ship. Get her to sail to the coordinates given in the book and when you get there, dive over the side for the galleon. Pick up the monkey head and then pick up the anchor or the rope to get back up to the surface. Head for Booty Island, and when you get there, give the antique dealer the monkey head and claim the first piece of the map. Twisted, you reckon? You ain't seen nothing yet!



"There's only one thing worse than not being invited to a party, and that's being given the wrong address."

Walk to the path on the left and go to the governor's mansion. Give your invitation to the guard and put on your costume. Go into the mansion, pick up the map piece from the picture frame and try to leave. Try your hardest to persuade Elaine to come back to you, but you'll always fail, she'll throw the map piece out of the window and Guybrush will be kicked out. It's about time he was given a good seeing to. Go back upstairs and take the oar down from the wall. Go back outside and try to pick up the map piece, but it will only fly away. How sad.



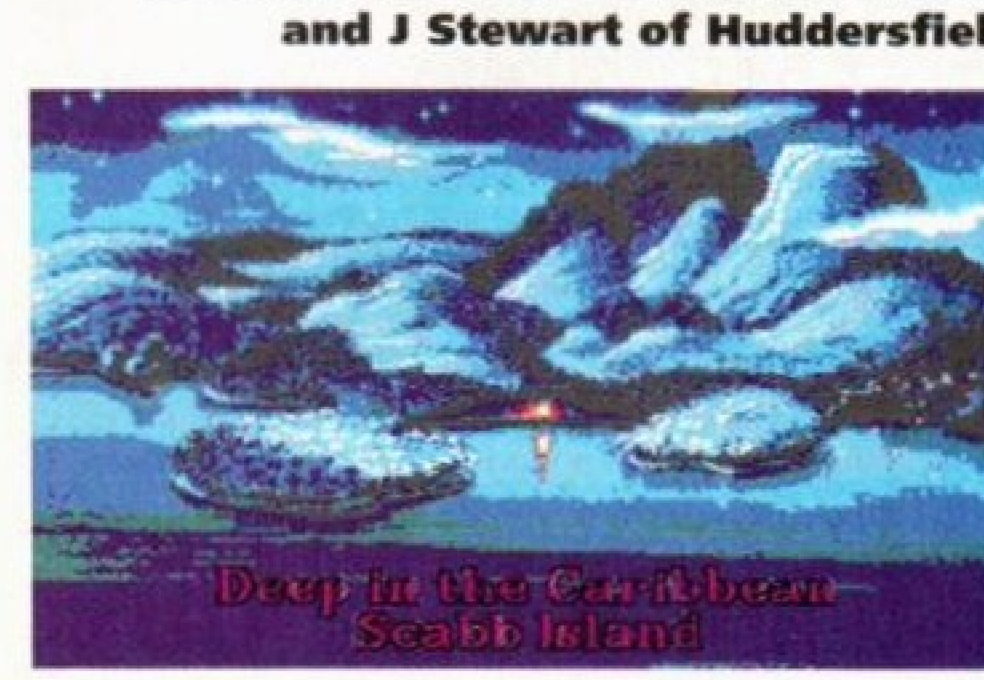
Your key to freedom, and you still haven't earned it all yet. You didn't think it would be that easy, did you?

Walk over to the woods on the right and change clothes. Walk back to the mansion, pick up the dog and walk to the side of the house. Knock over the garbage can by picking it up, and quickly walk to the front. Walk to the side of the house on the other side, preferably before the chef catches you, and walk to the door. Pick up the fish and sail off to Phatt Island.

Walk to the pier and talk to the fisherman – it's his pole you're after. Accept his bet and give him the fish. When you've got the pole, go back to Booty Island, walk to the path on the left and go to the cliff. Walk to the edge of the cliff and use the fishing pole on the map.

And that's it. Two map pieces collected, you're half-way through *Part 2*, and you're roughly half-way through the whole adventure. Can you wait until next month to see the rest of the solution?

Solution by Simon Tindall of Gwent and J Stewart of Huddersfield



Join us again next month as we continue the saga that makes *Whicker's World* look positively parochial.

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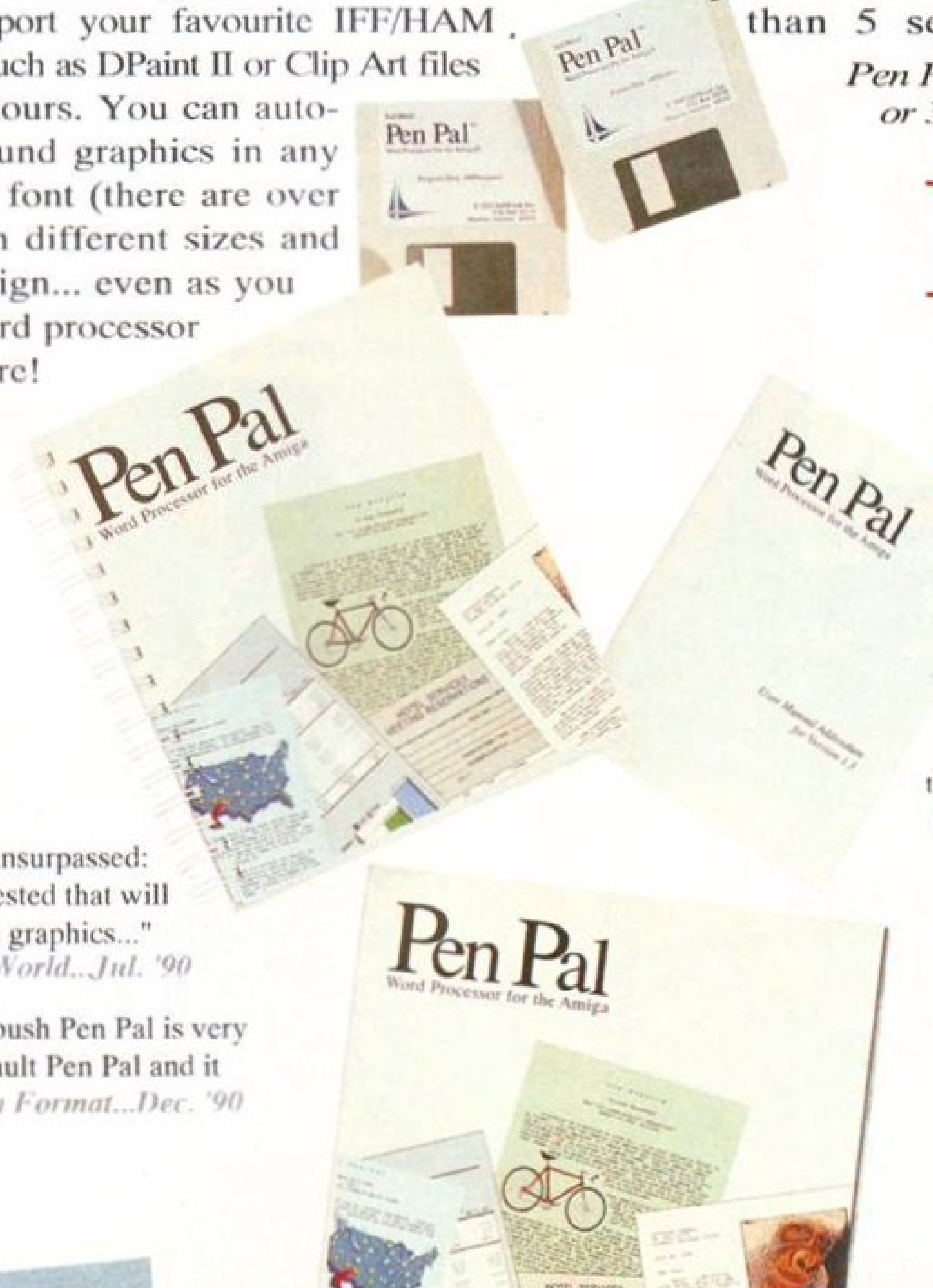
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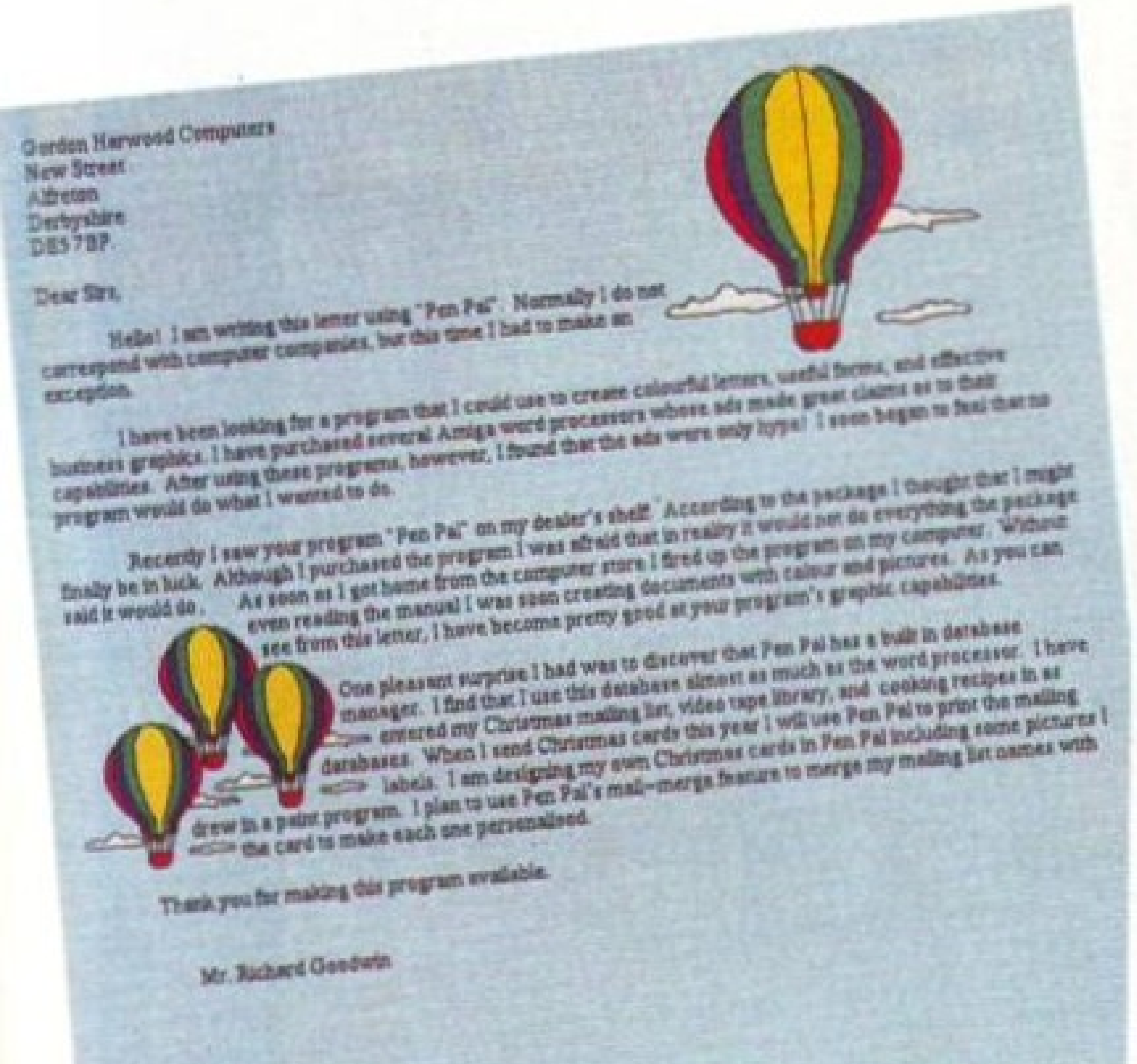
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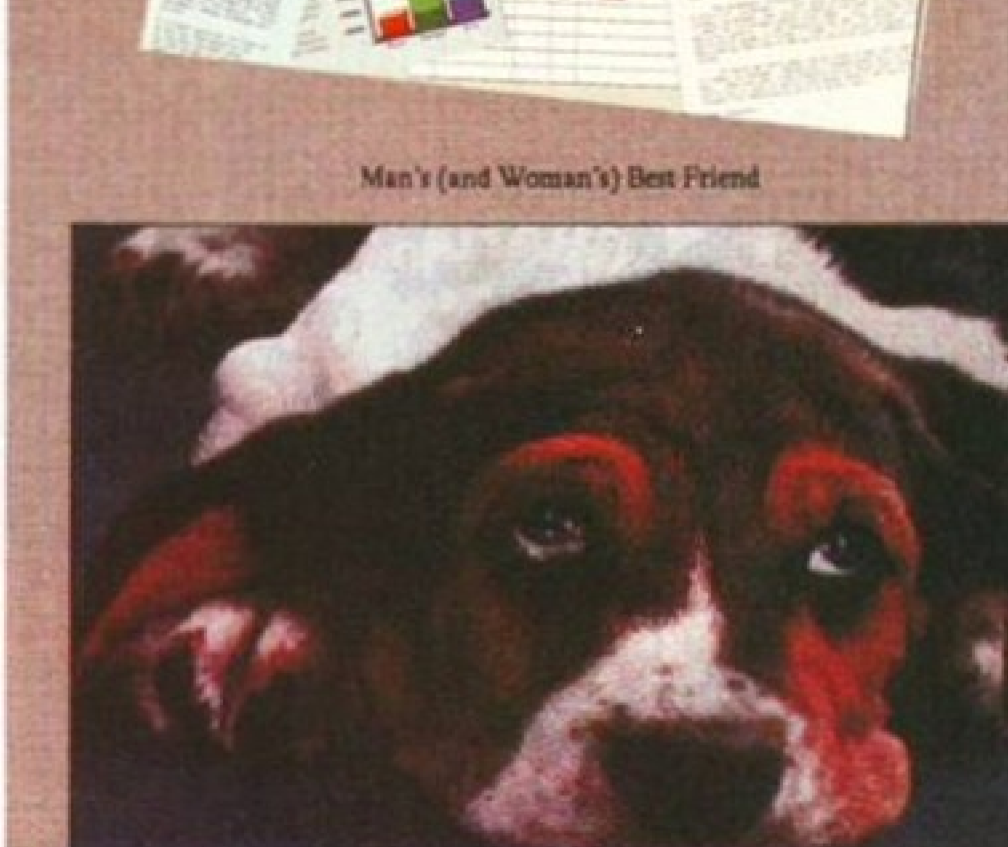
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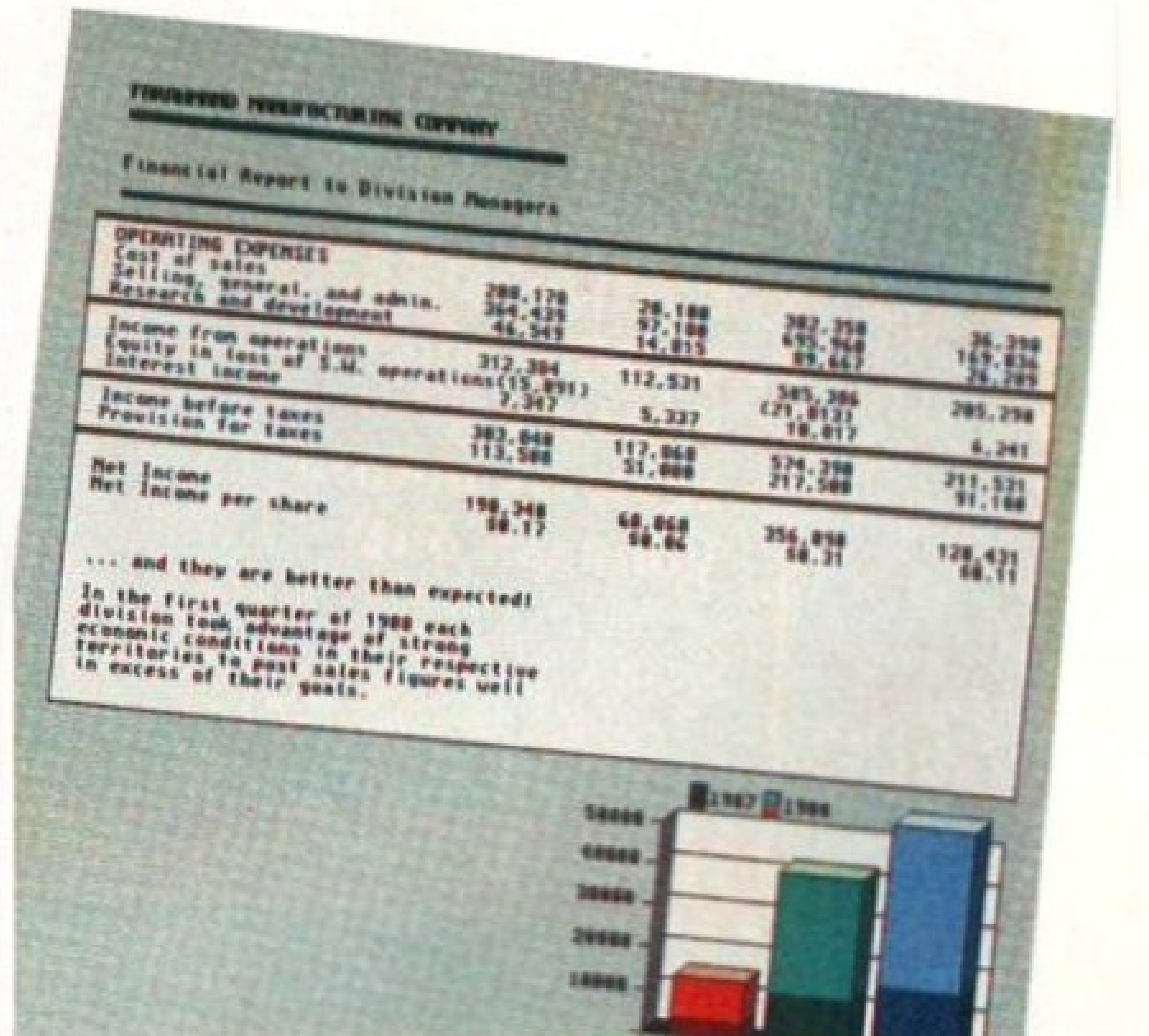
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Helping Hand

Once again in the never-ending battle against fiendishly difficult games, the Helping Hand waves its magic wand and strikes a blow in the name of freedom, justice and devious cheats. OK, so we've managed to sort out a few people's problems, that's all.



Mantis men with flashing blades are dangerous things. They could have your *Eye of the Beholder* out, mate.

EOTB2 or not EOTB2

We are writing to ask for some much needed help on *EOTB2*. The problem is that we have gone through a teleportation system and have ended up in a 3 x 3 room, completely sealed with walls. We can't get out.

Jonny, Pete and Craig
Colwyn Bay, Clwyd

Last month, R Saxby from Bristol was having great difficulty with the same perplexing plate puzzle. Luckily for all of them, though, fellow adventurer Daniel Stow from Tunbridge Wells in Kent has come to the rescue. Solving the puzzle on the Margoyle level of EOTB2 is very simple. Lay your equipment on the plates in the following pattern:

X		X
	X	
X		X



If you hadn't been doing your Mad Lizzy exercises, you'd never have cleared that jump in your pyjamas.

Shadow play

Please, please, please could you help me. A number of workmates and I are stuck on level 12 of *Prince of Persia*. The problem is the that the reflection is impossible to kill. A solution would bring harmony back to our place of work.

Graham Aspinall

It's a tricky problem, but the solution's simple. All you have to do is put your sword away and then walk into your reflection. It will disappear and if you continue walking over the edge of the platform, a bridge will appear beneath your feet.

The name's Bond

£25 In response to Spencer Gamble in June's issue of ***Amiga Format***, here is a skip-level cheat for *The Spy Who Loved Me*. Type in 'MISS MONEYPENNY' and you can now skip levels by pressing [F10].

Claire Martin
Edinburgh

Thanks Claire. Another one in the eye for SMERSH (or is t SPECTRE in The Spy Who Loved Me?)

Skip-em-up

£25 In Issue. 35 I noticed that Darryn Surrant needed a cheat for *Xenon II*. Well, here it is. Just pause the game and type 'RUSSIAN AIR' (with spaces). Unpause the game and to skip levels all you have to do is press [N].

Ian Hatcher
Camberley, Surrey

Nice one Ian.



"You silly tart, let go of me waistband! I can't reach the bulb if you won't let me stand up properly, can I?"

Come out fighting

I have just bought a game called *Pitfighter*. Would you please give me a cheat?

Neil Jenkins (aged 7)
Stafford

Okey dokey. Just type LOBSTERS while you're fighting and you'll be able to skip all of the levels by pressing [L] to go to the elimination round, and [C] to go the championship.

My head is spinning

I wondered if you had any tips or cheats for *Magic Land Dizzy*. I'm completely stuck on it. I can't get anywhere! Any help would be appreciated.

Steve Russell
Shepton Mallet, Somerset

Oh dear. Can't get anywhere on Magic Land Dizzy, *hey? Then it's lucky a* Dizzy *fan sent in the solution. Here are a few hints to get you started:*

Flick the switch for the drawbridge before going to rescue anybody. To get into the castle, use the key at the bottom of the monolith. To get rid of the troll, use the big stick on the goat. Pick up the diamonds as you go along, and start to rescue Dizzy's friends in the following order.

Dora – pick up the power pill and go to the ghosts. Eat them both, pick Dora and drop the power pill. Drop Dora in front of Prince Charming.

Denzil – pick up the handle and use it on the well. Pick up the bucket, go to the hot-water geyser on the far right and fill the bucket with water. Then drop the bucket in front of Denzil.

Daisy – go to the far right and pick up the drink-me potion. Then go towards the gold castle and pick up the gold cross. Next up you have to go into the crypt in Zak's castle and drop the gold cross. Go below the crypt and right, where you will find Daisy. Drop the potion in front of her.

Michael Low
Marlow Bottom, Bucks

And finally, a post-European Championship plea to all you football supporters out there who have completed Graham Taylor's Soccer Challenge. *You could save a life or two if you write in with your tips for taking a team to stardom. Here's why:*

I have almost been driven to a rather unfortunate suicide. Help! All my players are flippin' donkeys.

Joe West
Bexhill-on-Sea

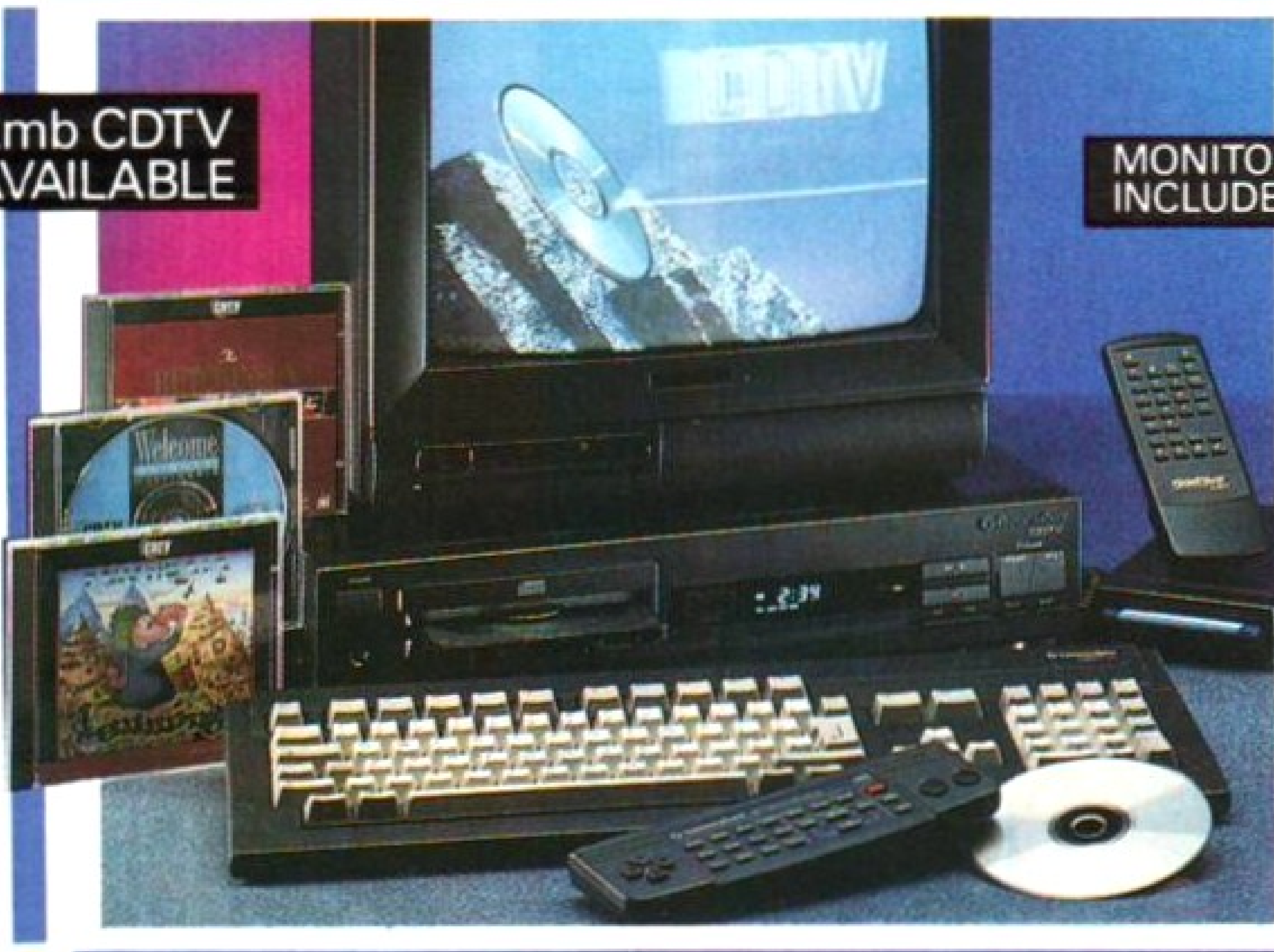
Help me! I am getting very annoyed, very quickly. I can't make any money. What am I doing wrong?

Steven Bates
West Bromwich

If you're stuck on a particular game or have a solution to a letter printed in the magazine, then write it down and send it in to us at **HELPING HAND**
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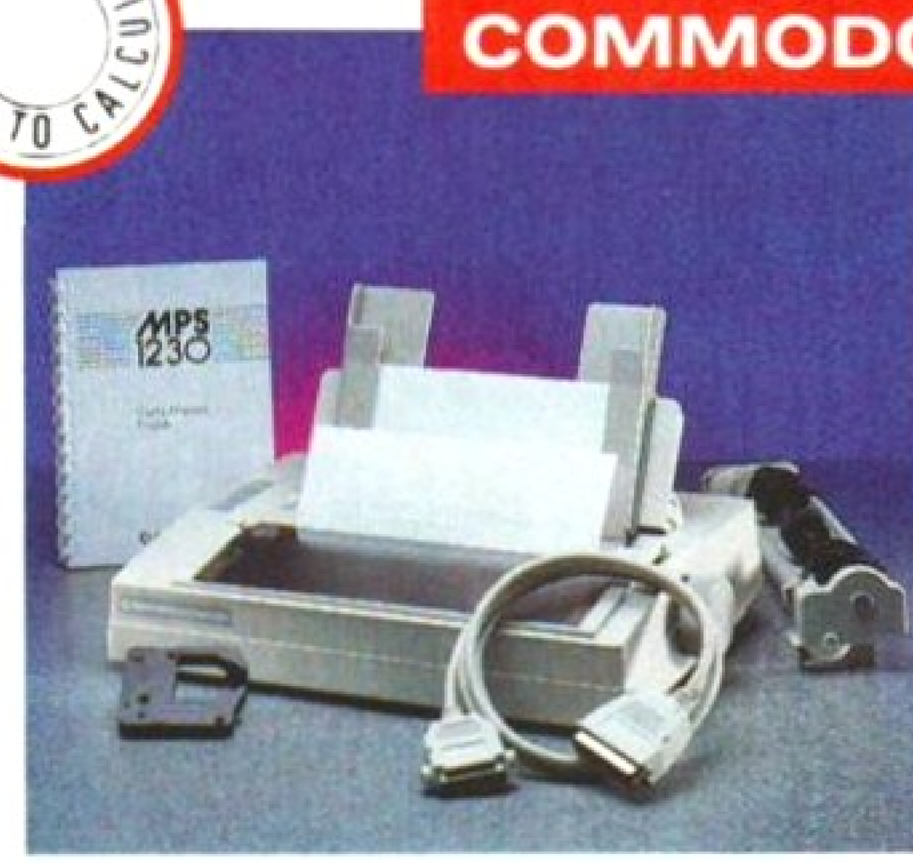
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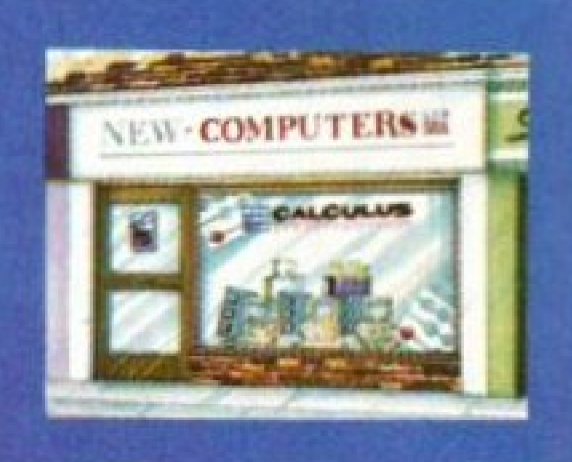
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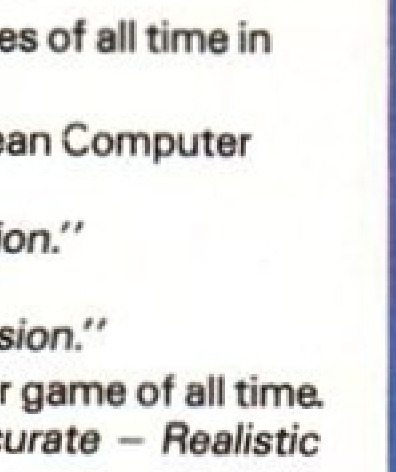
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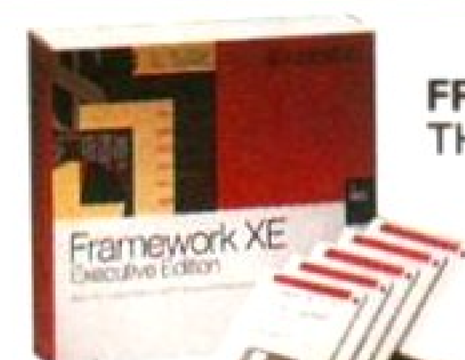
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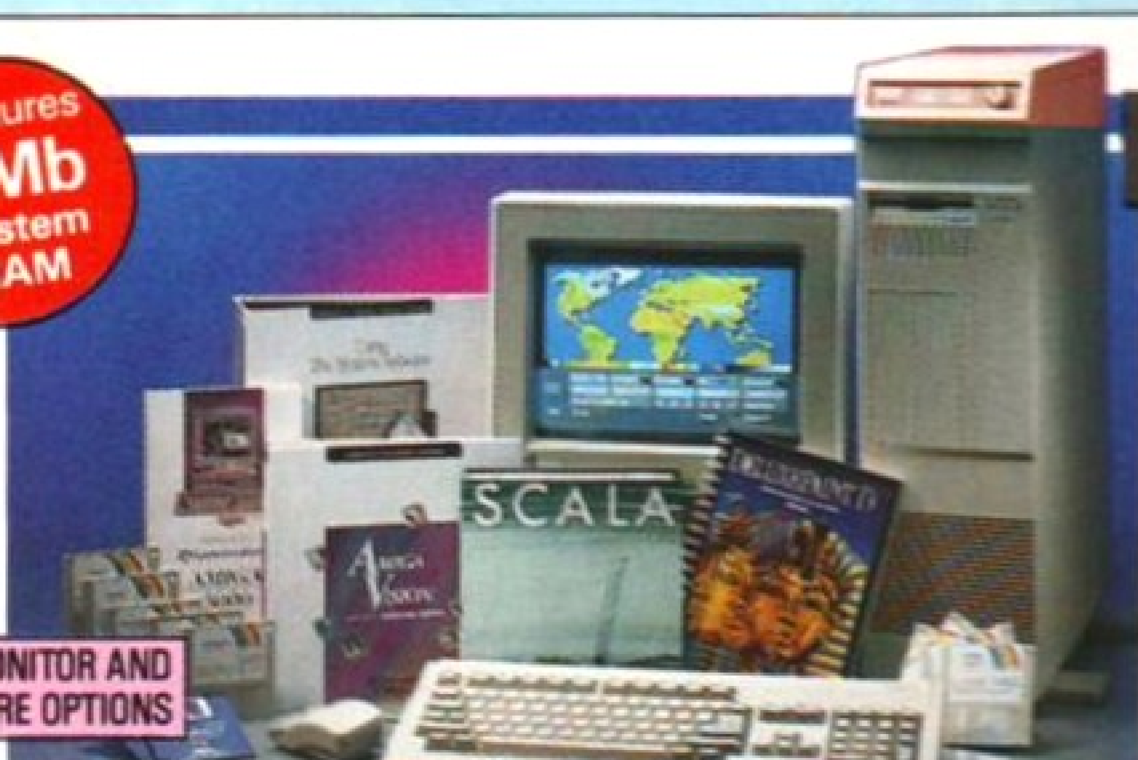
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Coming Contraptions

Here it is, your hot-off-the-press guide to what's in store for the more 'serious' side of your Amiga. Software, hardware, bits of firmware with knobs on – we've got it all, ear-marked for a full review in a forthcoming issue. For now, feast your eyes on these...

DON'T TAKE FLIGHT – TAKE CONTROL!

COLORADO SPECTRUM MOUSE YOKE

£24.95 RC SIMULATIONS 0272 550900



This is without a doubt the barmiest-looking peripheral we've ever seen here at ***Amiga Format***. It's made up of a g-clamp, a piece of cast aluminium, a plastic tube and a pair of handlebar-type thingies. The aluminium block fixes to the edge of a table and the tube and handlebars slot into the block. The crazy ingredient is your mouse, which sits backwards on top of the block, held down by a length of elastic.

Daft as it sounds, you have to admit it doesn't look all that bad, and (even stranger) it actually works! It's not the most robust of add-ons, and you get the feeling that it wouldn't last up to a full game of *Formula 1 GP* if the going got tough. But surprise of surprises, it did – and it was actually quite fun. It's meant for flight sims, though it works on any game that's mouse-controlled.

STIK-GRIPPER TOTAL CONTROL STAND

£14.95 RC SIMULATIONS 0272 550900

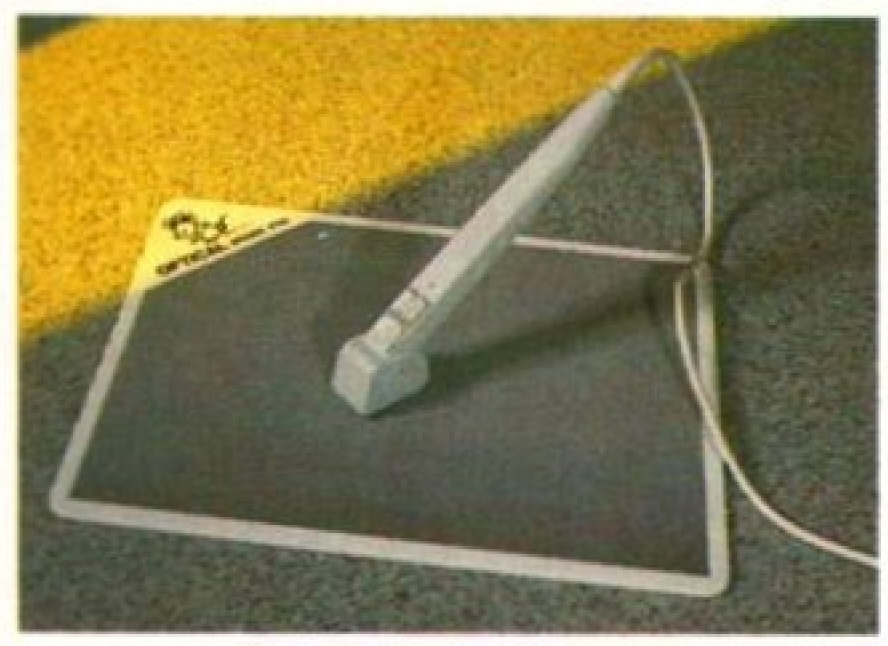


Another rather kooky gizmo from RC Simulations is this thing – the TCS joystick stand. It comes in flatpack form, and it's made up of three bits of pre-formed plastic, a bunch of nuts and bolts and a couple of strips of Velcro. It's assembled in seconds and, once built, it's a perfect resting-place to plonk your joystick when you've only got a small worktop.

Your joystick is held in place by the Velcro, and the whole stand fits neatly under your legs (well, it depends on the shape of your legs really). Although it looks a tad uncomfortable, it's actually unnoticeable after a few seconds. Once again, it's intended for flight-sims really (where it really pays dividends because it puts the joystick in the correct position) but you can use it for any number of applications.

ALFA DATA PEN MOUSE

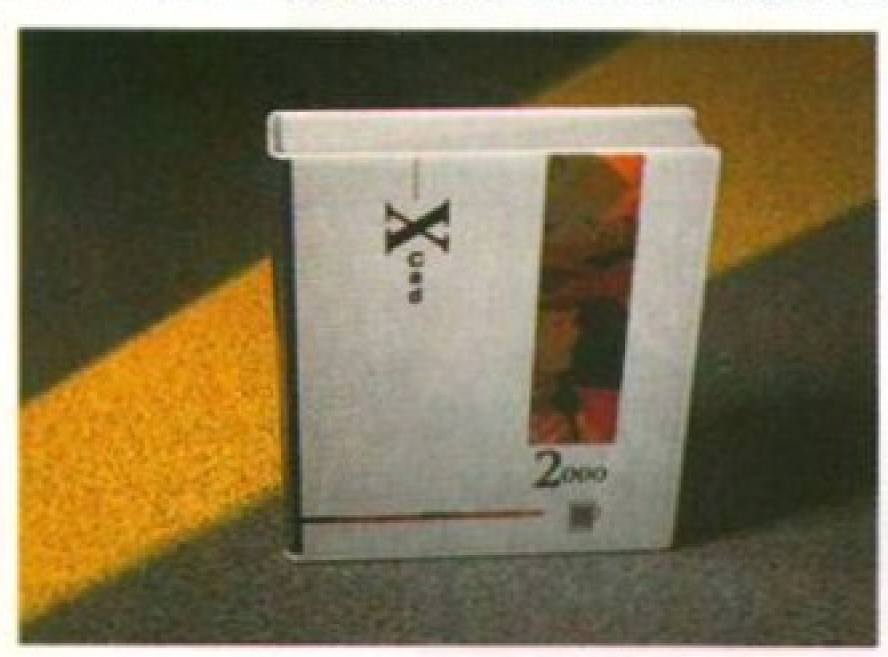
£29.95 GOLDEN IMAGE (UK) 081-365 1102



So you don't like using your common-or-garden mouse? Have you had enough of trackballs and you want to try something different? Whether you're just bored or looking for a better way to draw on *Deluxe Paint*, the new Alfa Data Pen Mouse could be what you've been looking for. In a nutshell, it's an optical sensor mounted in a pen-style casing, with a special optically encoded mouse-mat. It's light, easy to handle and it feels pretty much like a pen once you've adjusted to it.

XCAD 2000/3000

£129/£359 DIGITAL MULTIMEDIA 0702 206165



XCad, the potential new rival to the *DynaCADD* computer-aided designer, now appears in two new incarnations: *XCad 2000* and *XCad 3000*. *XCad 2000* is a low-priced, entry-level system which can be returned for a full refund when you upgrade to the high-end *XCad 3000*. *XCad 2000* comes with extensive 2D and 3D tutorials, 2D construction and detailing commands, a true 3D database, and automatic perspective views.

XCad 3000 uses the same command structures and databases as *XCad 2000*, with the addition of support for industry-standard graphics tablets and powerful reporting facilities. Look out for a detailed review in a future issue of ***Amiga Format***.

BOOSTING UP YOUR A600

We all knew it wouldn't be long before the add-on manufacturers started making new bits for the A600 – but we didn't realise they'd be quite so quick. If you're looking for a way to add a megabyte or a half-megabyte of RAM to your A600 – then there's already a way...

AMITEK A600 1MB RAM BOARD

£59.95 (£29.95 UNPOPULATED) SILICA 081-309 1111



Open the trapdoor on the underside of your A600, plug in this 5 by 10cms circuit board and bingo! You've got a full 2Mb of RAM in your new A600. What's more, it's even got a battery-backed-up clock, so the date and time on your Workbench are always accurate. The clock battery is actually a capacitor which takes its power from the trapdoor connection, so you never need to change it. As long as you top it up occasionally by switching your computer on, it'll last for ages. Available with half a meg, or one full megabyte of RAM.

EXPANSION SYSTEMS 601C A600 RAM BOARD

£46.86 ZCL 0543 251 275



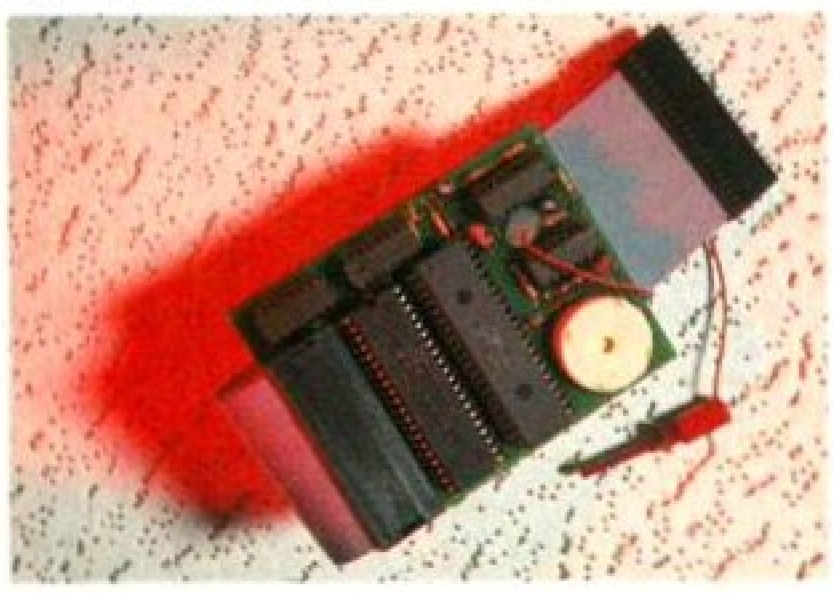
Like the Amitek board, the Expansion Systems Baseboard 601 is available in half and one-meg versions. It fits neatly into the trapdoor slot under your A600. The board size is virtually identical, and most of the components are the same, with the exception of the clock battery. This is a more traditional lithium battery, so it will need changing once every couple of years or so. But this is easy because Expansion Systems have put it on the exposed side of the circuit board so you don't need to remove the whole thing from the trapdoor.

THERE'S ROM IN HERE FOR TWO!

If you're a Workbench 1.3 user, you're probably bemoaning the fact that you haven't got the new features available on Workbench 2, and if you've recently upgraded to a new machine, you're probably upset that you can't run some of your old software anymore. A dilemma? Not anymore, thanks to a new breed of add-on boards which enable you to have the best of both worlds. ROM sharers (as they're known) have sockets for two Amiga ROMs (generally you'd use a 1.3 and a 2.01 ROM, but in theory you could use any Amiga ROM, old or new). Here are two that are just about to hit the streets...

ICD ROM SHARER

£TBA SILICA 081-309 1111



The ICD ROM Sharer is a small circuit board about 10 by 6cms big, with a ribbon cable which connects to your old ROM socket. Fitting it requires you to open your Amiga's casing, so don't expect your guarantee seals to be intact afterwards. You have to lever out your old ROM and fit it into the socket on the Sharer board and you'll also need to buy a new ROM for the other slot.

Switching between Workbench versions is really easy – it automatically boots up using the ROM in slot 1, but to change over, you just have to hold the Ctrl-Amiga-Amiga keys until you hear a beep. Couldn't really be a lot easier, could it?

TRILOGIC KEYBOARD ROM SHARER

£27.99 (1.3 ROM £29.99, 2.01 ROM £39.99) TRILOGIC 0274 691115



This ROM sharer is made by UK-based hardware manufacturer Trilogic and it performs exactly the same tasks as the ICD equivalent. Similarly, it fits inside your Amiga's casing (voiding the guarantee), and uses the same switching method.

Switching between ROMs is performed in the same way, using the standard Ctrl-Amiga-Amiga reset combination. The only real difference is the type of ribbon connector used and the size and layout of the board, which is a bit larger than the ICD version.

SAMPLE COLLECTION

£49.95 WALKABOUT MUSIC 0726 813807



Walkabout Music, a fledgling company based in Cornwall, started out in business by selling their samples on cassettes via professional music magazines. As well as the usual offerings of drum sounds and spot FX, the company takes in samples from several different cultures from all around the world, even as far away as Africa, India and the Far East.

Now they are heading into different territory again by marketing their collection in the form of disk-based sound samples for the Amiga. Each different sound has been sampled at twice the normal rate of most Public Domain Amiga samples which gives a far greater clarity, while retaining compatibility with most sequencers.

Each disk is filled with samples, and you can pick up one for £2.50, 10 for £19.95, or the whole 24 for 50 quid.

EXPANSION SYSTEMS BASEBOARD PLUS 4 A500P RAM BOARD

£79.99 (UNPOPULATED) TRILOGIC 0274 691115

This system is designed to be used on the newer A500 Plus machines to provide up to 4Mb of RAM. It's different to old A500 RAM expansions in that it uses all the new signals provided on the A500 Plus trapdoor connector. There is one drawback however: there's a second board which fits under the Gary chip requiring you to open your machine's case. The chances are that your A500 Plus is pretty new, so this means kissing goodbye to the guarantee. It's available in four configurations: 1Mb (£99.00), 2Mb (£129.99), 4Mb (£169.99) and Unpopulated (£79.99).

'Serious' reviews

This is the section of the magazine dedicated to bringing you honest and intelligent reviews of the latest 'serious' releases in hardware and software.

From expansions such as extra memory and hard drives through to useful, practical utilities to the latest in 'productivity' (DTP, databases) and 'creativity' (paint, animation, 3D, digitisers and music) software, it's all in here.

Two years running, *Amiga Format* has been voted by computer retailers as the magazine that they most trust when they're deciding what to stock, so you can see that we're the people best placed to advise you on what to buy. With our expert knowledge, we know what's the best program to date for any particular kind of job, and we'll see how anything new stacks up against the best in the business.

Contents

There's an astonishing mix of reviews on the menu this month, so prepare your tastebuds for a real delight.

How the Ratings System works

SPEED (marked out of 5) ●●●●●
Tremendously important for both hardware and software: there's nothing more annoying than waiting. A purely intuitive judgement.

DOCUMENTATION (out of 5) ●●●●●
Although there are some packages that are so simple no manual is needed, complex items benefit hugely from a good explanation.

ACCESSIBILITY (out of 5) ●●●●●
The target for all good software should be powerful but simple: this rating assesses how easy it is to get to grips with the item.

FEATURES (out of 5) ●●●●●
Does it do what you want it to do? How well does it do it? And does it also do lots of other things that you'd never have thought of?

VALUE (out of 5) ●●●●●
A pretty important rating, this one: if a package does everything you could wish for, it's no use to you unless you can afford to buy it.

AMIGA Verdict FORMAT

The Verdict, our at-a-glance overall rating, is a percentage: it's based on sheer quality but with the price taken into account, so that you know what kind of a deal you get.

You've got a computer that creates gorgeous graphics, so why look at them in a blurred and distorted way? You need a monitor! **Jason Holborn** and **Trevor Ablott** test all the options and pick the best.

Screen Play!



The line-up of monitors awaiting the *Amiga Format* screen test.

THERE ARE VERY few extras that actually make your Amiga easier and more pleasant to use. Sure, a RAM expansion will enable you to grab larger sound samples and run massive applications, and a hard disk will make the Amiga faster and more usable. But if you ever sit in front of your Amiga for more than a few minutes at a time, a monitor can make a world of difference to your quality of life.

Why go for a computer with great graphics, then settle for blurred images and muddy colours? Why buy a word processor when you can barely read what you are writing on the screen and your letters give you a headache? When using the Amiga's video signal — squeezing it through a TV 'mud'ulator and squirting it at the telly — you're inevitably settling for second best.

It's obvious from the results of our recent reader survey that a large proportion of our readers plan to improve the quality of their Amigas' displays. If you're not one of the 48% of readers who already own a monitor, you'll soon come to realise that it could be your best buy since the Amiga itself.

Choosing the right monitor is by no means a simple task. With such TV techie jargon as multiscan, dot pitch and SCART flying around, it's no wonder that many users get confused. To help you make the right buying decision, let's take a look at the three main options that you face. If some of the special monitor jargon is initially baffling, don't worry — on the next page you'll find possibly the most comprehensive guide to monitor jargon ever published.

There are three types of monitor available: SCART TVs; single-scan monitors; and multisync monitors. To be able to make the right buying decision, it's important that you understand what the differences are between them.

WHY OUR TESTS ARE THE BEST...

To most of us, a monitor is a monitor — so we thought we'd get the complete picture by talking to a qualified TV engineer. Trevor Ablott has been tearing TVs and computer monitors to pieces for more years than he dares to mention and can certainly spot a good monitor from a dodo. Equipped with his trusty tool box and degausser, Trevor was let loose on a selection of monitors in the hope of sorting the wheat from the chaff.

Thanks to his considerable knowledge, we have drawn up a set of review guidelines by which to test even the most well-endowed monitor. To ensure fairness, Trevor did not test any of the monitors until they had been left on for at least quarter of an hour. As Trevor is keen to point out, this is very important because it gives the monitor time to settle down.

To avoid purity problems, all the screens were degaussed using an external degausser beforehand. A degausser is a piece of equipment used to correct purity problems caused by magnetic fields generated by such things as hi-fi speakers. Finally, all the monitors were tested using *VTools*, a PD program that produces a variety of video test images.

After degaussing, all the monitors were checked for purity, pin cushioning, convergence and striations — these terms are explained in the jargon-busting section on the right. Also, the design of the case itself, ease of use and quality of construction are taken into account.

SHOPPING ADVICE

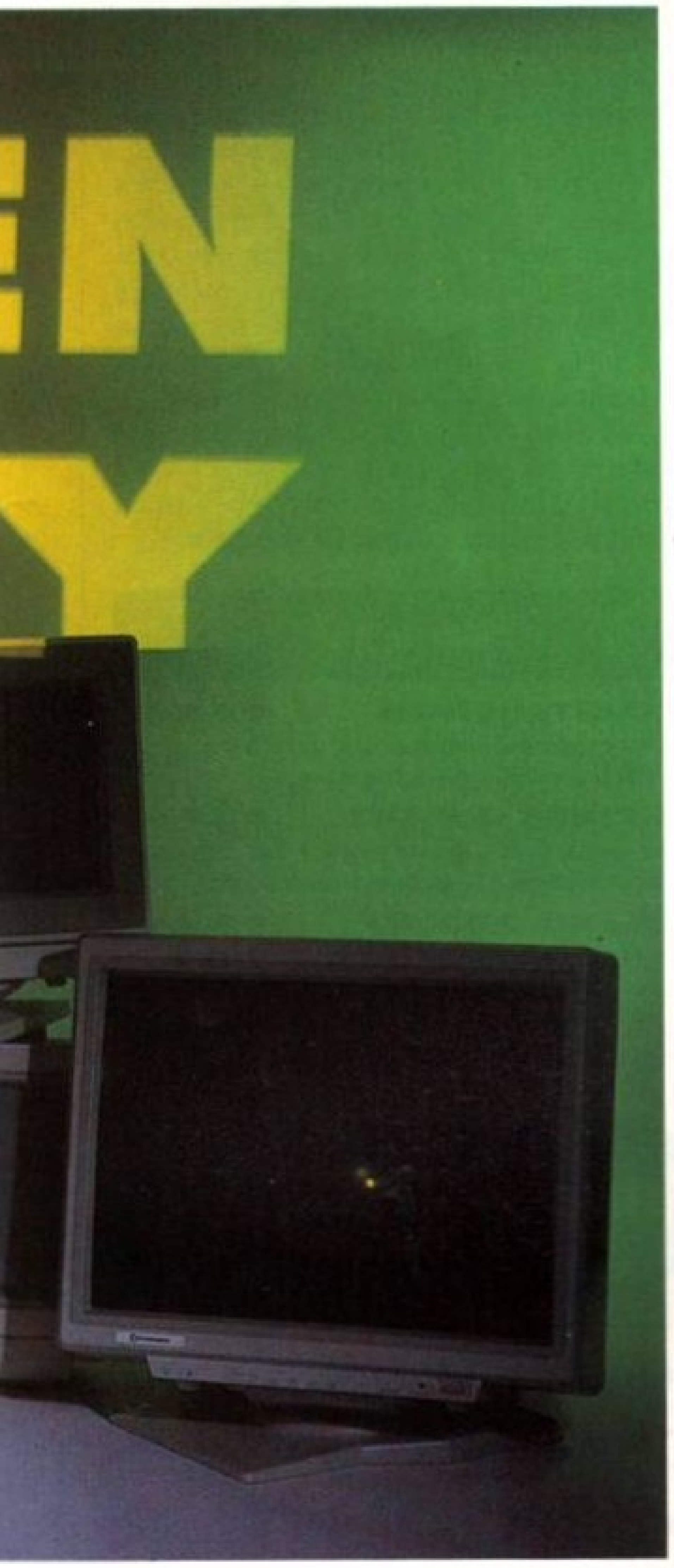
If you're looking for a monitor, keep these all-important points in mind.

SUITABILITY — very important when choosing a monitor. If you're the kind of person that uses an Amiga for nothing more than playing games, then a SCART-equipped TV will probably be more than adequate. Although it won't provide the best quality pictures, it's still on a par with the kind of video screens used in arcade machines.

Multisyncs are really only of benefit to professional users or those of you who spend a lot of time running applications that work in interlaced screen modes — DTP, CAD, solid modelling and so on.

For the rest of us, a standard single-scan monitor is the best bet because it provides the best price-versus-performance ratio of the three types of monitor available.

SCREEN MODES — although virtually all multisyncs support the new ECS screen modes (hi-res, super hi-res, productivity and the like), some cannot handle standard Amiga screen modes. If the software you want to use does not support productivity mode, then you will need a flicker fixer



Like all things in life, each has its advantages and disadvantages.

Most people, as soon as they buy an Amiga, plug it into the telly via the TV modulator included with the Amiga.

The modulator translates the Amiga's RGB video display signal into an RF (radio frequency) signal, which the TV then has to translate back to RGB again before it can display it. All this messing about with the signal degrades the picture.

The first way to improve your picture, therefore, is to cut out the TV modulator. Once that's out of the way, there is no good reason why you shouldn't use your telly as a monitor.

Your secret weapon is a thing called the SCART connector (an acronym for the less than wieldy monicker 'Standard Connector for Audio, Radio and Television'), often referred to in TV instruction books as a Euroconnector. Most modern TVs have one or two of these attached. All you have to do is get a cable from your computer dealer to connect your Amiga's RGB socket to the telly's SCART socket, and you're away.

Many portable TVs are now being fitted with SCART sockets, so these make a viable alternative to a computer monitor. And, of course, they mean you can switch to Neighbours if you wish. We're reviewing several SCART-equipped portable TVs here.

Next up we have single-scan monitors, which are currently the most commonly available. Such monitors are often designed specifically for the Amiga and are also capable of taking a direct RGB signal. They are far and away the most popular monitors for the Amiga.

Despite the fact that they work in basically the same way as a SCART TV, single-scan monitors give a slightly better quality of picture because they use better quality tubes — the tube is the glass bit on which the picture is displayed. Not only that, but a monitor is designed specifically for handling RGB signals and therefore is optimised for this task.

For the ultimate in picture quality, you need a multisync monitor — a device capable of displaying RGB signals that have different sync speeds. Most multisyncs will be able to detect the sync speed of the display signal that the computer is putting out and switch to that speed automatically.

Single-scan monitors are more popular simply because most of us have no need for a monitor that runs at different speeds. A TV picture runs at 50Hz (50 cycles per second), which means the picture changes 50 times each second. All the normal Amiga screen modes do the same.

If, on the other hand, you want to use the new super high-res and productivity modes of the Amiga's enhanced chip set to do detailed professional work, or you want to use a flicker fixer to remove the irritating flickering of interlace mode, you need a multisync.

Multisyncs generally produce better quality images because the tubes are better again. VGA and S-VGA monitors are very similar to multisyncs, but are often limited in their frequency range although they too can often be used with the Amiga.

Multisyncs and VGA monitors have one big disadvantage though — they are designed primarily for Macintoshes and PCs, so they don't generally have built-in speakers. You would need a separate amplifier and a set of speakers, to listen to the sound track of your favourite games, although you'll get good results by connecting your Amiga to your hi fi.

MONITOR JARGON UTTERLY BUSTED

CONVERGENCE - all colour displays contain three 'guns' that fire electrons at the screen to form the picture on a TV or monitor. One gun fires red light, one green, and one blue. If the guns are not lined up correctly, you will get coloured edges appearing when two vertical blocks of colour are placed side-by-side. This can best be viewed with a series of grey scales. If the convergence is bad, you will see a coloured hue appearing between the two blocks.

PURITY - when looking at a screen that contains just a single colour, the intensity of the colour should be equal throughout. Purity problems can be caused by the screen being magnetised by the monitor's own loudspeakers, which produces dark blotches. As a general rule, always keep TVs and monitors away from strong magnetic fields (speakers, for example).

DEGAUSSER - a magnetic coil with which a screen can be de-magnetised (de-gaussed) to sort out purity problems caused by strong magnetic fields.

PIN CUSHION - ideally, the visible area of the screen should be a perfect rectangle, even when the screen display is stretched to full width. If the monitor is said to have a pin cushioning fault, however, the sides of the screen will be warped inwards.

SHADOWMASK - the shadowmask is a technical term for the screen that the image is drawn on to by the electron guns within the tube. The screen is made up of a mesh that allows the electrons to come through and hit the screen in a fixed pattern.

RESOLUTION/DOT PITCH - the dot pitch of a monitor describes the shape and the size of the holes in the shadowmask mesh. The smaller the dot pitch, the higher the definition of the image. Dot pitch can range from 0.5mm to as little as 0.21mm.

LINE TIME BASE - the line time base is the time it takes for the dot produced by the electron gun to scan across the entire width of the screen producing a single scan line.

STRIATIONS/LINE RINGING - striations are vertical lines (normally on the left-hand side of the screen) that are caused by inadequacies in the line time base.

SCART/EUROCONNECTOR - a Standard Connector for Audio Radio and Television (SCART) is a standardised connector for feeding RGB/composite and audio signals to a TV or monitor.

FREQUENCY/SYNC - all video signals contain two synchronisation signals for the horizontal and vertical time bases which tell the monitor how fast it should horizontally and vertically redraw the screen.

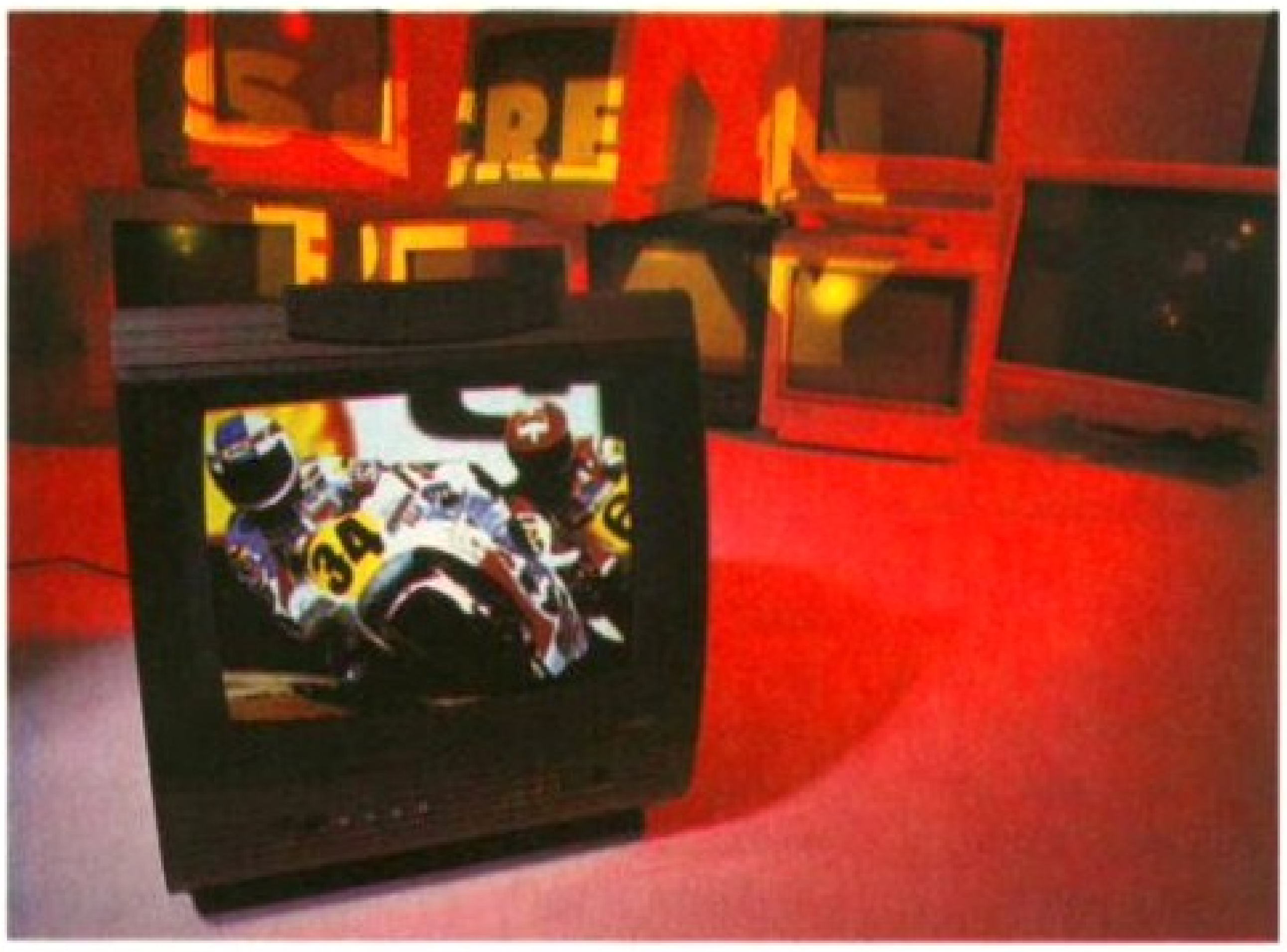
RGB - an RGB video signal is a signal that has been split up into its three colour components: red, green and blue.

COMPOSITE - unlike RGB, a composite signal contains all colour, sync and audio signals combined into a single signal.

RF - used by televisions, RF (radio frequency) is a type of composite signal that was devised specifically for transmission through the airwaves.

to enable the multisync to display them. If the multisync can support a horizontal frequency of approximately 15KHz and a vertical frequency of 50Hz, then a flicker fixer will not be required for standard screen modes.

CONNECTORS – Most multisyncs use a 15-pin 'D' connector that can only be connected to the Amiga using an adaptor cable. Commodore include a suitable adaptor with their multisyncs, but virtually no other manufacturers followed their lead. Even MicroWay's flicker fixer does not support the standard 15-pin 'D' connector, so an adaptor cable will be needed.



Book TV

Philips ■ £249.99

Stylish and unusual to the point of being weird, the Book is the second in Philips' designer 'Your TV' range which aims to appeal to fashion-conscious youngsters by looking very different.

If you're buying for a style-conscious child, this could well fit the bill. Gone is the trad box design that we've come to expect from TV manufacturers and in its place is a very stylish case that is sure to satisfy even the most discerning fashion freak.

Cased in moulded jet-black plastic, the Book TV resembles a half-open book with the pages fanned out to form the rear of the TV. Moulded into the front face of the Book's 'cover' is a 14-inch grey tube covered by a piece of glass that is actually a polarised screen filter which helps the Book to cut down on glare while maximising the contrast. This can be particularly useful when using the Book to display interlaced images – the filter reduces flicker to an almost acceptable level.

Below the screen are a number of push-button controls divided into two separate groups. On the left-hand side are the usual volume and channel controls; on the right is a menu button which brings up a series of on-screen controls enabling you to alter the brightness, contrast and colour of the image. Also included is a built-in headphone socket, which is ideal for keeping all those thumping game soundtracks to yourself.

At the back is that all-important SCART connector, by which the monitor can take an RGB signal direct from the Amiga. Under normal circumstances, the Book behaves exactly like a conventional TV, but as soon as an RGB signal is fed to the TV, the RGB signal overrides the TV picture and the Book turns into a monitor.

Considering that the Book uses a conventional tube, the overall picture quality is very good indeed. Colours are crisp and bright and the screen purity is surprisingly good. Unlike most SCART TVs, the picture geometry shows virtually no sign of pin cushioning whatsoever and striations are kept to a minimum.

There were signs of slight convergence problems, but this is to be expected from a low-cost tube. Surprisingly, the Book handles very high resolutions well, although lines of text do become somewhat unreadable on a SuperHiRes interlaced screen.

The quality of sound from the Book's pair of stereo speakers is very good, with plenty of bass and high-frequency response (even at higher volumes). Sound capabilities are some of the best that I've heard from a monitor — they're certainly a lot better than the Commodore 1084S monitor.

If you're after a TV that can produce a decent display for your Amiga and you want something unusual, then look no further. Sound and picture quality are excellent.

Book TV

CONSTRUCTION ●●●●
A very solid and well-designed case, although it could prove to be difficult to clean.

PICTURE QUALITY ●●●●
Not on par with a decent monitor, but definitely one of the better TV/Monitor combinations.

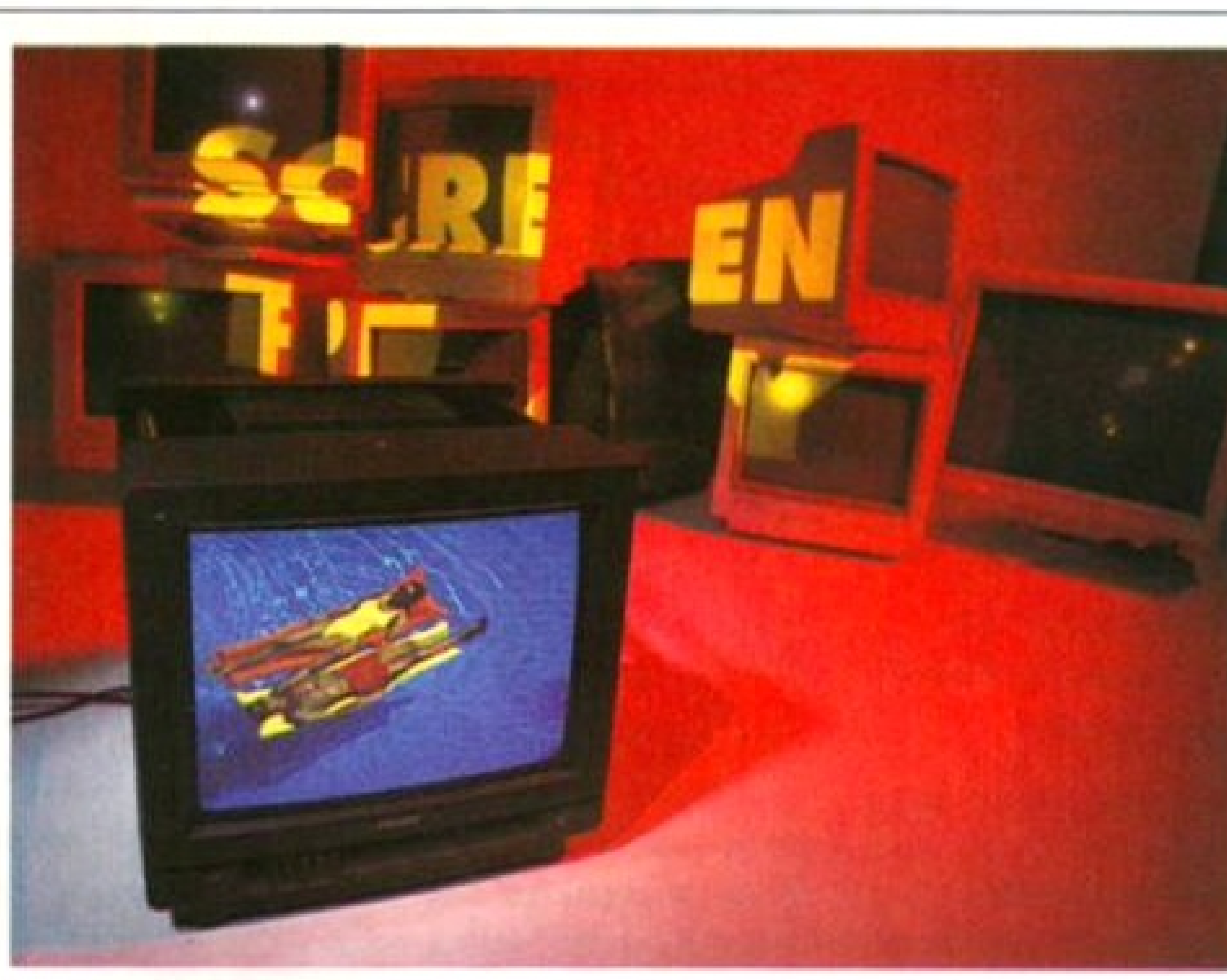
SOUND QUALITY ●●●●
Plenty of bass and loads of high-end response even at high volume.

VALUE ●●●
You are paying extra for the trendy design.

AMIGA FORMAT Verdict **85%**

TV monitors

If you need a TV and a monitor but can't afford both, then a TV monitor could be for you. **Jason Holborn** tests the market leaders.



The Cube

£279.99 (15"),
£329.99 (17") ■ Philips

Small and black, and really quite good. The Cube from Philips.

From the same stable that brought us the Book TV comes the Cube TV, another classic from Philips that is as odd-looking as it is impressive. Sporting a case design that would look more at home on the back of a train carrying nuclear waste, the Cube TV continues Philips' recent attempts to make the average TV monitor look a little bit more exciting.

As a TV, the Cube is certainly a mean performer. Unlike all the other TV Monitors reviewed here, the Cube is the only one to support Teletext, something that is more of a necessity these days than a luxury. Teletext — and indeed TV channels — cannot be accessed while the Amiga is feeding the Cube an RGB signal, simply because the RGB signal from the Amiga bypasses the TV tuner. Like all TV monitors, the Cube is fed its RGB signal via a SCART connector.

One very nice aspect of the Cube TV that it shares with NEC's MultiSync 4FG is the use of an FST (flatter, squarer tube), which helps to cut down on the amount of reflections that the screen produces. Flat tubes also produce an image with much better geometry, especially when the tube is of the quality that we've come to expect from Philips. Thankfully the Cube certainly doesn't disappoint —although our review sample showed slight ghosting (the faint repetition of an image), purity was exceptional, image geometry was as near as dammit and convergence virtually A1.

Philips have certainly gone to town with the Cube's sound capabilities too. Mounted into the top of the Cube's casing is a subwoofer (no, that's not a miner's dog). This is a high performance speaker that gives the Cube what is possibly the best bass response of any monitor. Though the sound is still a little 'plasticky', it's still miles better than any of the other monitors.

Philips have done it again. Not content with producing the best Amiga single scan monitor and a very capable TV monitor in the shape of the Book TV, the Cube is the best TV monitor money can buy.

Although the image quality is not perfect, the Cube pushes the TV monitor ilk to its very limits. If you want a TV that can also handle your Amiga's output, then look no further than the Philips Cube.

The Cube

CONSTRUCTION ●●●●
Solid and extremely well designed, the Cube is a joy to behold.

PICTURE QUALITY ●●●●
Apart from the slight ghosting problems, the Cube's picture quality was very good indeed.

SOUND QUALITY ●●●●●
Thanks to that built-in subwoofer, the Cube is bassier than MC Hammer.

VALUE ●●●●
The Cube may seem expensive, but it offers all the features you could expect.

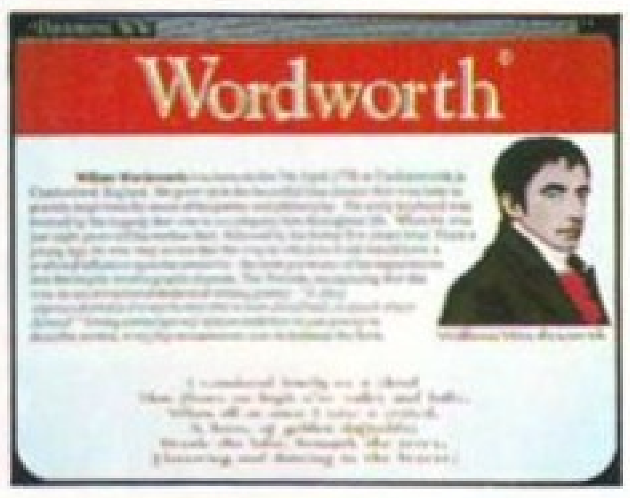
AMIGA FORMAT GOLD **90%**

Wordworth

a writer's dream v1·1

The graphical nature of Wordworth® makes producing documents faster and easier. The WYSIWYG display shows exactly how your printed document will look, different fonts, styles and sizes, headers and footers, graphics and so on.

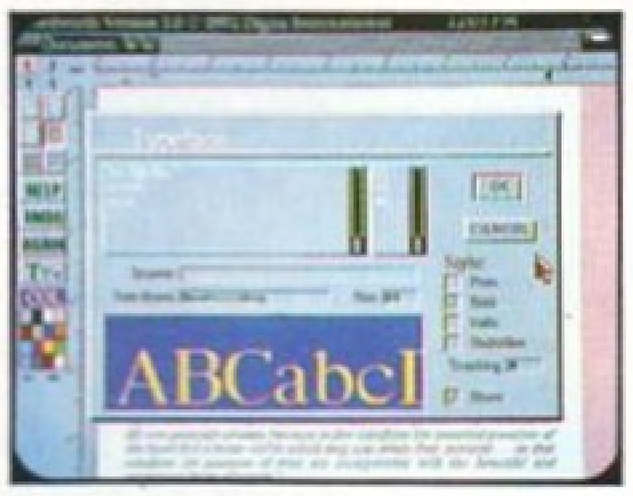
Commands are grouped under a series of pull-down menus, accessible either by the mouse or keyboard. Frequently used commands have on-screen icons, including Help, should you need it.



Experience the look and feel of the new and exciting WB2 (even if you use WB1.3). Each document is a separate multi-tasking window, which means you could for example, print one document while editing another.

Digita's® innovative *Human Interface Protocol*™ is incorporated setting a new standard in speed, style and elegance. "It *HIP*™ system is intuitive and a pleasure to use." – thank you Amiga Shopper, it's nice to be appreciated.

Graphics have always been the Amiga's strong point. Now it's better than ever. Pictures from Deluxe Paint can be placed in a document, and then sized, scaled and dragged (text automatically reformats around the image).



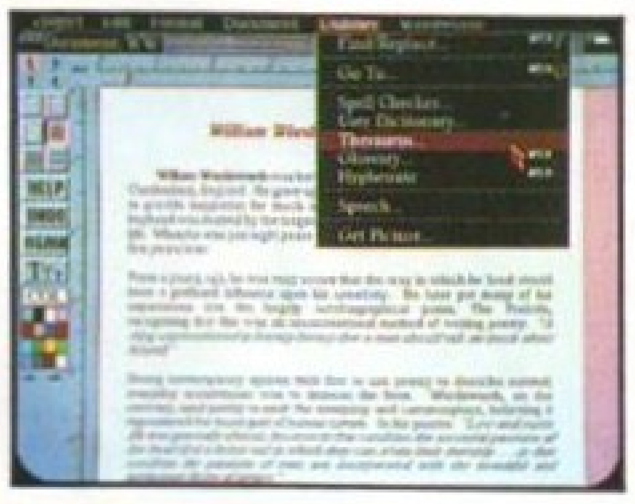
Wordworth's enhanced fonts will give you the very best printed quality. You can also print special symbols, such as boxes, arrows and so on. Better still, you can mix graphics, Wordworth's enhanced fonts, Amiga fonts, Colorfonts and your printer's own internal fonts, all on the same page. There's even a driver for Postscript printers.

You needn't worry about your existing information – Wordworth will let you open documents from most word processors, including Kindwords, Protext and Wordperfect (you can also mailmerge with Superbase).

When Amiga Format said "a new word processor that will give the rest of the world a run for its money" they weren't joking.

Wordworth is written in the UK by Digita. Which means you'll be using an English Collins spelling checker and thesaurus, and you'll know where to come for professional support.

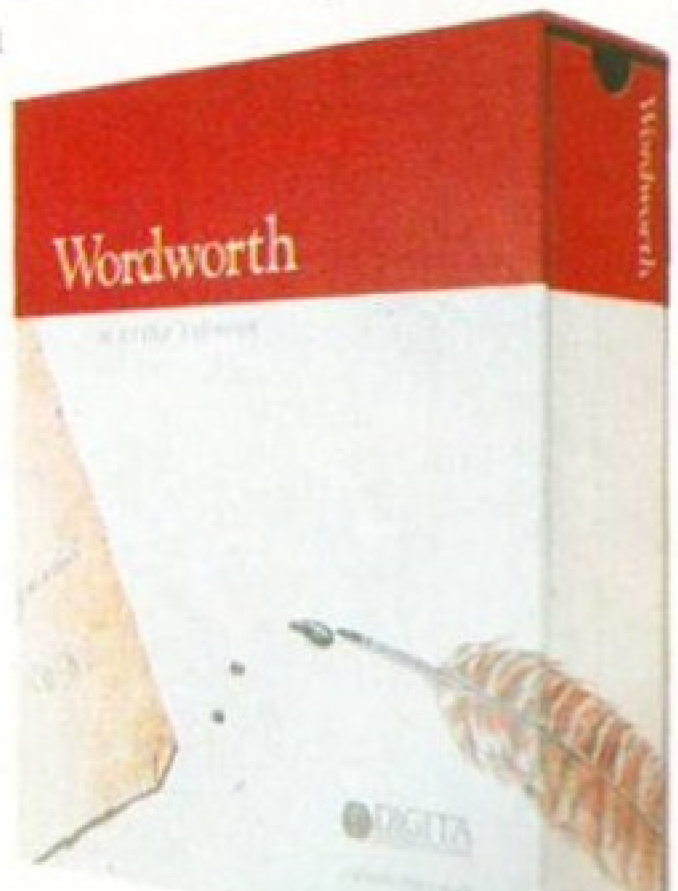
The only way to really appreciate Wordworth is to use it. Phone 0395 270273 for more information or, write to Digita, FREEPOST, Exmouth EX8 2YZ.



Wordworth costs £129.99, which includes VAT, postage and packing; and when purchased from Digita, comes with a 7 day money-back guarantee.

If you already own a word processor, for a limited period only, you can trade-up for just £89.99 by returning your original disks to Digita with your order.

Summing up, Amiga Shopper said: "Pounds-per-feature no other Amiga word processor comes close. Wordworth is what every owner of Kindwords would wish they had." Dreams become reality with Wordworth.



Machine support
Written specifically for the Amiga
Fully supports WB V1.3 and V2.00
All medium or high resolution modes (mono and colour)
Requires 1MB of memory

DIGITA® INTERNATIONAL

software thats right™

Wordworth is available from John Menzies, Virgin, W H Smith and all good computer retailers or to the trade through Columbus, Gem, HB Marketing, IBD, Lazer, Leisuresoft, Precision and SDL.

Digita International Ltd Black Horse House Exmouth EX8 1JL ENGLAND Tel 0395 270273 Fax 0395 268893

– A member of the Digita group –



CBM 1084S

£299.99 ■ Calculus

Commodore's original and best monitor has undergone major design changes over its seven year life. The latest model has the same styling as its predecessor, the 1084.

The plastic colour has changed to suit the A600's lighter cream, although it still looks just as good with anything from an A500 to an A3000.

The 1084S's connectors are all eaxctly the same as those on its forbear – it takes an RGB signal through the now standard nine-pin 'D' connector (Commodore supply an appropriate lead), but it can also display a composite signal through a conventional phono plug.

Like all Commodore monitors, the 1084S's internal components are not made by the company – it's actually a re-badged Philips monitor. As a result, it shares virtually all of the facilities offered by Philips' CM8833 Mk2. Unfortunately, it often seems as if Philips are simply using Commodore as a dumping ground for sub-standard tubes — every single 1084 I've ever seen (and I've seen a few in my time) was not as good in terms of picture quality as its Philips equivalent.

Our review model is definitely one of the better examples, but it too shows signs of slight purity and convergence problems and remains slightly out of focus, even after playing around with the contrast controls to get the best image.

One thing that is very nice about the 1084S are the controls. Now Commodore has got its corporate act together, the 1084S is very well designed, with all the controls located in a very sensible and easily-accessible front panel. Unlike the controls on the 1950, they are also very precise.

If you are loyal to Commodore and would never consider buying anything other than a Commodore monitor, then the 1084S is still a good buy. Although getting a decent one is still a rather hit-and-miss affair, the 1084S is a stylish and well-built monitor.

CBM 1084S

CONSTRUCTION ●●●●
Not quite as solid as it some of the other monitors, but still a well-built box.

PICTURE QUALITY ●●●
Slightly out of focus, but acceptable.

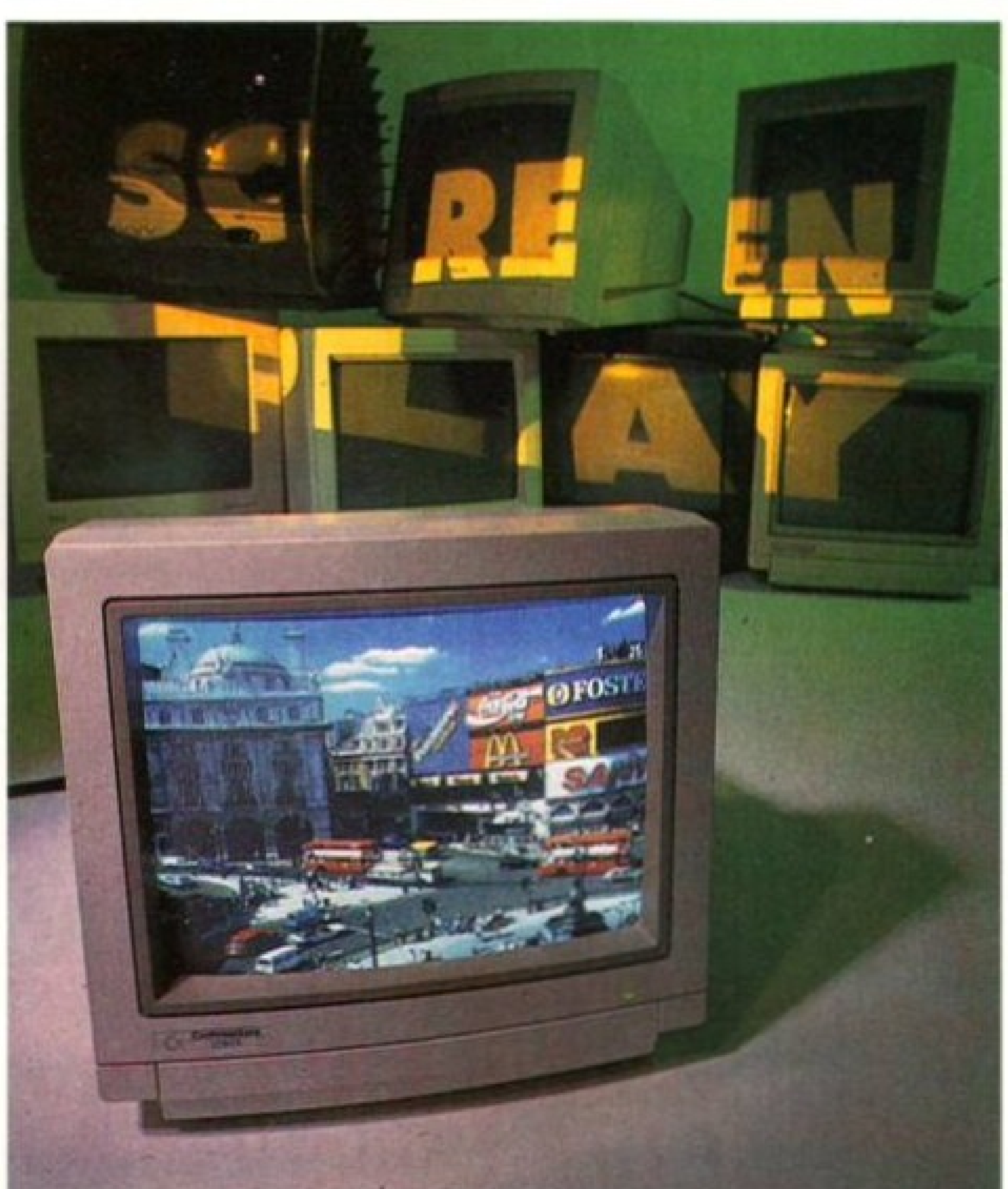
SOUND QUALITY ●●●
Bass sounds are a little weak, but high frequencies are handled well.

VALUE ●●●
All in all this is rather an expensive buy, especially when you compare it to the Philips.

AMIGA FORMAT Verdict 80%

Single-scan monitors

For most people, a standard monitor is the best bet. **Jason Holborn** picks the choicest…



CBM 1085S

£299.99 ■ Calculus

Although the 1085S is actually a relatively new arrival on the scene, I must admit that I'm slightly disappointed to find that it is actually exactly the same monitor as the CBM 1084S.

Even after checking through the specifications of both monitors, I can find no difference between the 1085S and the older 1084S, apart from the badges on the front of each and their slightly differing shades of cream-coloured plastic.

I can't quite understand Commodore's reasoning behind the 1085S — perhaps they feel that existing users who own Amigas with a slightly darker shade of cream won't appreciate the lighter colour of the 1084S. If you can come up with a better reason, then answers on a postcard to the usual address please.

One thing that the 1085S does demonstrate, however, is how two monitors that seem exactly the same can end up so different in picture quality. Although it has good colour purity, the review model suffers badly from pin cushioning, is slightly out of focus and the image is warped terribly in the bottom right-hand corner of the screen. All of these problems could easily be corrected by an experienced TV engineer, but then you don't expect to have to send your brand new monitor off for repair in the first place.

The faults of the 1085S demonstrate how monitors that are exactly the same can be so different. TV manufacturers quote a 10% difference in tube quality either way — so you could either end up with a monitor that is some way better than average or one that is totally naff. In this particular case, we were definitely sent a monitor that had slipped to the wrong side of that 10% margin.

To be fair, though, everything I've said about the 1084S should normally apply to the 1085S. Taking these occasional naff example as a fact of life, the 1085S is usually a very good single-scan monitor and if you end up with one that has the same sort of problems as our review model, send it back and ask for a replacement.

CBM 1085S

CONSTRUCTION ●●●●
Like the 1084S above, the 1085S is solid and well-constructed.

PICTURE QUALITY ●●●
Our review sample is frankly lousy, but offers good colour purity.

SOUND QUALITY ●●●
Bass is still a problem, but the high treble frequencies are handled well.

VALUE ●●●
Like the 1084S, the 1085S is rather expensive.

AMIGA FORMAT Verdict 75%

MONITOR AS A TV

If you desperately need the quality of a single-scan monitor, but you'd also like to use it as a TV, then there are ways of getting the terribly realistic antics of the Neighbours cast showing on a monitor near you. Philips (who already produce a single-scan monitor in the shape of the CM8833 Mk2) produce a TV adaptor that will literally convert your Amiga to a stand-alone TV. The adaptor takes the form of a flat black box that sits underneath the monitor. By plugging in an ariel and tuning the various channels on the adaptor, a TV picture can be fed to any monitor that will accept a standard composite signal. The adaptor can be used on all the single-scan monitors here.

If you've got a spare video recorder hanging around, you can already turn your monitor into a TV. Virtually all video recorders have some form of 'video out' connector, although most modern recorders combine the audio and video connectors into one via our old friend the SCART connector. Pop along to your local electrical store though and you'll be able to pick up a lead that breaks the SCART signal into separate video and audio phono connectors. Next, plug the 'video out' lead into the 'CVBS in' connector on the back of your monitor, connect the video to an ariel and switch the monitor to 'CVBS in' and, hey presto — one Monitor TV.



The most popular screens for Amigas, single-scan monitors, can be used as a straight TV too...



... simply use a TV adaptor or a video recorder and the right combination of leads...



... and sit back to enjoy TV soap operas on your Amiga monitor.



CM8833 Mk2

£229.99 ■ Philips

From the people that make the Commodore 1084S and the 1085S comes the CM8833 Mk2, the new improved release of the classic CM8833. Philips used to make two monitors for the Amiga (the CM8855 being the other), but they've now decided to concentrate their collective marketing efforts on a single model. Featuring some very swish styling, the CM8833 is undoubtedly still the market leader both in terms of design and picture quality.

Like the Commodore single-scan monitors, the CM8833 is fed its RGB signal through a nine-pin 'D' connector. Once again, Philips kindly supply an Amiga-compatible lead so you can start using your new monitor as soon as you get it home from the shops. If you buy a Philips TV Tuner, you can also run it on the CM8833 by feeding its output to the monitor's composite input at its rear. The CM8833 provides all the usual image controls, including brightness, contrast and colour, all of which are accessed from a series of controls at the front of the monitor.

In terms of picture quality, the CM8833 is miles better than the competition. Although our review sample has slight convergence problems (which is unusual), the focus is very good indeed giving a crisp and highly-detailed display. Colour purity is also very good thanks to the CM8833's superior grey tube.

Unlike the Commodore monitors, there's no pin cushioning to speak of. Virtually all the Philips monitors that I've seen have been of equal quality, so it makes you wonder why Commodore's monitors (all of which are produced by Philips) are so bad.

The sound quality of the CM8833 monitor is also very good, but bass is still a little lacking. Sound definition is better than that of the Commodore monitors, although low-frequency noises do still sound a little weak. If you really want to hear what your Amiga is capable of, you do need to plug the Amiga into a hi-fi system — I haven't yet seen a monitor that can produce the same kind of frequency response that even the cheapest of hi-fi speakers can handle.

Philips' monitors have always been known for their high quality and the CM8833 Mk2 is just another in a long line. If you're after a single-scan screen, you'd be a fool to buy anything other than a CM8833. The picture quality is considerably better than any of the competition. The CM8833 monitor earns its *Amiga Format Gold* award with flying colours.

GAME ADVICE

From September, the Philips CM8833/II will be bundled with a free copy of the Gremlin racing game *Lotus Turbo Challenge 2*. If you're thinking of buying a monitor, it might be worth waiting a few days to gt one of these packs. See *News* for more details.

CM 8833 Mk2

CONSTRUCTION ●●●●

Very solid and well-designed, the CM8833 is a little cracker.

PICTURE QUALITY ●●●●●

Apart from the slight convergence problem, the CM8833's picture quality is top notch.

SOUND QUALITY ●●●●

Bass is perhaps a little weak, but it still beats the competition hands down.

VALUE ●●●●

For a monitor of this quality, the CM8833 is worth every penny.

AMIGA FORMAT GOLD **92%**

MultiSyncs

For that ultimate picture quality, you need a multisync monitor. **Jason Holborn** visits video heaven.



7CM3209

£429.99 ■ Philips

Philips certainly likes to have its corporate fingers in every pie — not only do they market a TV monitor and a market-leading single-scan screen, but they also have something to offer the more demanding user, in the shape of their 7CM3209 Multisync monitor.

Sporting a design that is very similar to the original single-scan CM8833, the Philips 7CM is certainly no great looker, but it does the job well enough.

Our review sample monitor exhibits a couple of problems in the image department, including striations (vertical lines) and a slight shadowmask error, but on the whole the quality of its pictures is very good indeed.

This image-producing ability is good thanks to the 7CM's excellent 0.28 dot pitch. (The smaller the dot pitch, the better for the picture quality. The dot pitch can range from 0.5mm to 0.21mm in size)

Image contrast, purity and convergence is superb and the only fly in the ointment is its inability to handle standard Amiga screen modes, although running Workbench in productivity mode produces a very stable image.

To be able to use the standard screen modes, you would therefore need to invest in a flicker fixer to use this monitor.

Philips have always had a very good reputation among buyers and the trade for always producing monitors that are among the best quality on the market and the 7CM tested here certainly isn't going to tarnish that.

It is a shame, however, that this unit isn't able to handle the standard Amiga screen modes, but then few of the multisync monitors are able to do that.

The quoted retail price from Philips of £429.99 for the 7CM3209 does not have a great deal of relevance. Realistically you should be able find the 7CM discounted down to £329.99 at some outlets, so it definitely pays to shop around.

7CM3209

CONSTRUCTION ●●●
The design looks somewhat dated, but build quality is very good.

PICTURE QUALITY ●●●●
Apart from the slight shadowmask problem, the image is as steady as a rock.

FEATURES ●●●
Can't handle standard Amiga screen modes, but then very few multisyncs can.

VALUE ●●●●
It pays to shop around.

AMIGA FORMAT Verdict **76%**

CBM 21FST Multisync

£2,197 ■ Commodore

Like all Commodore's monitors, the CM21 isn't actually a Commodore monitor at all. Instead, Commodore have simply re-badged the Ranger 21MP from a company called Aydin Controls. The 21 in the 21FST's name refers to the 21-inch screen, an absolutely colossal affair that has been designed specifically for CAD and DTP applications.

Like both the 1950 and the 1960, Commodore have modified the monitor to handle all Amiga screen modes, not just those designed for multisync use. As a result you can use it without a flicker fixer, although a separate adaptor is still required to mate the 23-pin output from the Amiga with the 21MP's 15-pin 'D' connector. The



CBM 1960

£563 ■ Calculus

Commodore's multisync offering comes in the shape of the 1960, a monitor designed specifically for the Amiga 3000 and any Amiga fitted with either Commodore's own Display Enhancer or a suitable third-party flicker fixer, like those marketed by MicroWay Europe and ICD. Like the 21MP reviewed above, the 1960 can handle all Amiga screen modes, including both ECS and standard modes.

The styling of the 1960 certainly isn't anything worth shouting about. Considering the monitor was designed for the A3000 — a machine with very modern styling — the 1960 is a step backwards. Its rather boxy design looks more like the sort of thing we've come to expect from IBM, a company certainly not renowned for its design finesse. Worse still, the contrast, colour and brightness controls are so cheap and erratic that even tapping them sends the



quality of design and construction is very good, although you pay the price for such a solid design — to call the 21MP heavy would be an understatement.

Picture quality isn't bad considering the size of its tube, but it's still far from perfect. For starters, the 21MP doesn't handle high-intensity colours particularly well because of a rather low emission level. Even at its maximum brightness level, whites look rather washed out.

Our review model hadn't been set up properly either — grey scales exhibit a noticeable blue tint. Convergence is also not particularly good in some places and colour purity is far from perfect.

Considering the price, I would expect a far superior picture and, although the quality of construction can't be faulted, picture quality certainly doesn't justify the monitor's price. If it had been under £1,500, I'd recommend it wholeheartedly, but it's just another case of delivering too little for too much cash.



CBM 21MP

CONSTRUCTION ●●●●
The 21MP is very solid and well-designed.

PICTURE QUALITY ●●●
Not bad, but hardly acceptable for such an expensive monitor.

FEATURES ●●●●●
The 21MP can handle productivity and standard Amiga screen modes.

VALUE ●●
For a price this substantial you'd be right to expect a much better picture.

AMIGA FORMAT Verdict **75%**

screen image haywire. Considering the price, this isn't acceptable. Picture quality is also pretty lousy. Our review model shows convergence problems, focus is a little blurry and colour purity could be better. On the plus side though, the image shows plenty of contrast and brightness. Handling standard screen modes is a plus point and removes the need to purchase a flicker fixer.

Also available from Commodore for multisync freaks is the 1950, a monitor with almost the same features as the 1960 but in a slightly smarter case. Once again, the 1950 handles all Amiga screen modes, but has a better design and build quality. Sadly the 1950 is being phased out, but if you have a choice between the two, then go for this one. The 1950 has a better tube too — although there are pin cushion and convergence errors, purity is a lot better.

Both certainly aren't bad, but they're not in the same league as the Philips or NEC units. If you feel you have to stay loyal to Commodore, then either will do the job. For my money, I'd rather spend a little extra and buy a NEC.



CBM 1960

CONSTRUCTION ●●
Styling is a little old fashioned. Shame about the erratic controls.

PICTURE QUALITY ●●●
The convergence, purity and focus are not particularly good.

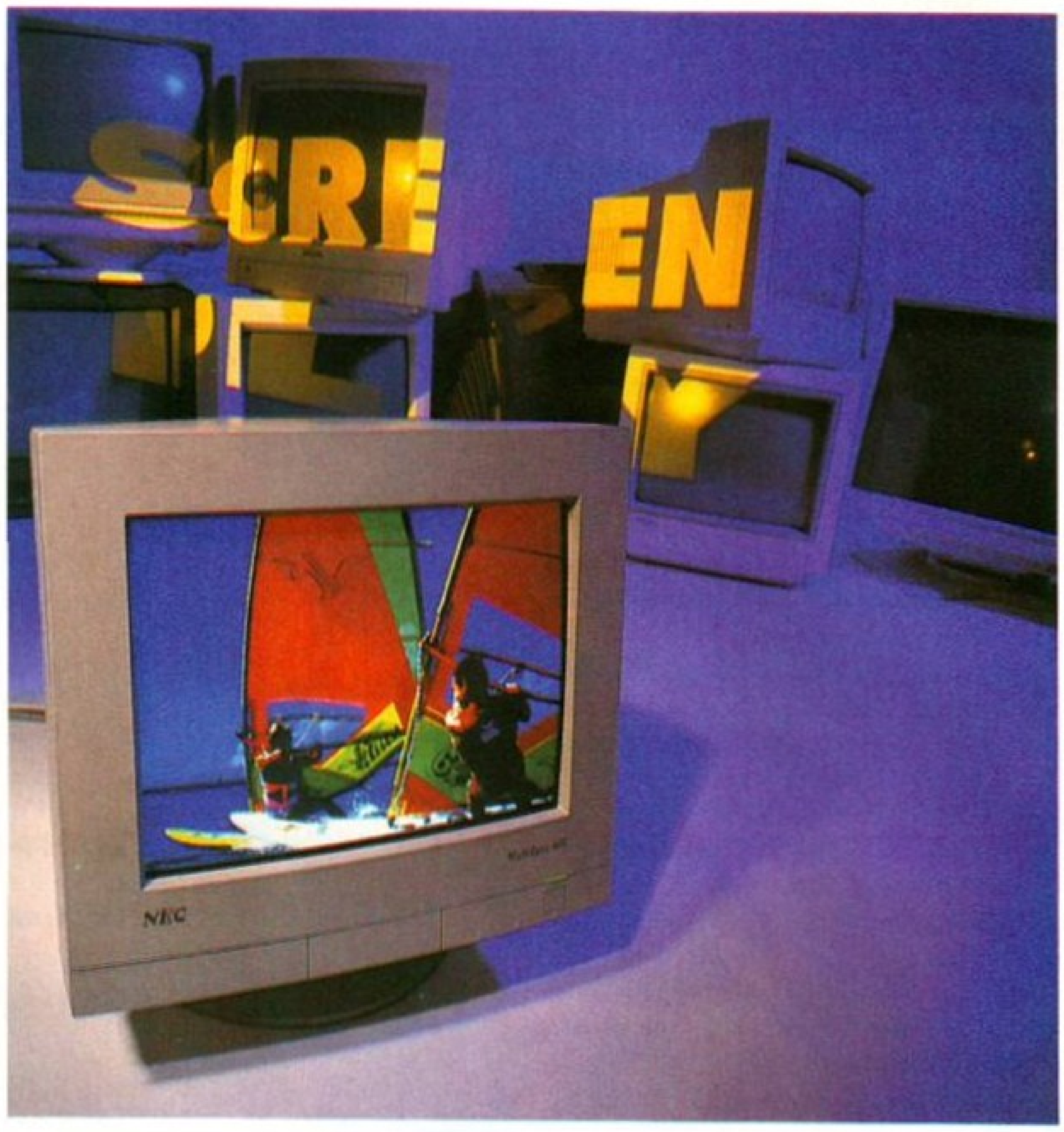
FEATURES ●●●●
The 1960 can handle all Amiga screen modes.

VALUE ●●●
If the picture quality was better, the 1960 would be a good buy.

AMIGA FORMAT Verdict **72%**

MultiSync 4FG

NEC ■ £599



At the opposite end of the monitor scale comes the MultiSync 4FG, the latest in a long line of market-leading monitors from NEC. Having used the 4FG for a couple of weeks now, I am not surprised that NEC have such a good reputation in the multisync market – the 4FG is quite simply the best multisync I've ever seen.

Picture quality isn't the end of the story – its styling (which bears more than a passing resemblance to Apple Macintosh monitors) is bang up to date and the overall quality of workmanship is first-rate. All the 4FG's controls are hidden behind a flip-down panel, enabling you to access them without having to fiddle around the back (or side) of the case to try to get your fingers in the right place.

Although the 4FG doesn't like standard screen modes, the picture quality of a productivity-mode display is second to none. Purity is virtually 100%, image contrast is excellent and the image geometry stays true even when the image is stretched to full width (no pin cushioning). One nice feature is 4FG's built-in degausser – something that every monitor should have.

As it stands, though, the 4FG only handles a single Amiga screen mode (Productivity) and even then you'll need the enhanced chip set installed inside your machine to access even this. If you attempt to connect the 4FG to an Amiga that is producing anything other than a productivity display, all you'll get is a very pretty garbled mess. To display standard screen modes, A1500 owners will need a MicroWay FlickerFixer and A500 owners will need something like the ICD Display Enhancer. Both of these cost over £100, so non-A3000 owners should consider this extra cost when purchasing the 4FG.

Gripes aside though, It's no wonder NEC have such a good reputation for multisyncs – the 4FG is an absolutely smashing monitor that beats every competitor. It's a shame it doesn't handle standard screen modes – if it did, the 4FG could have been the first piece of hardware ever to achieve a 100% rating!

NEC 4FG

CONSTRUCTION ●●●●●
Both the build quality and design are first rate.

PICTURE QUALITY ●●●●●
Even under our rigorous tests, the quality of the 4FG's picture is almost perfect.

FEATURES ●●●●
It's just a shame that it can't handle Amiga screen modes without a flicker fixer.

VALUE ●●●●
A lot to pay for a monitor, and you'll need a flicker fixer, but the it's the best you can buy.

AMIGA FORMAT GOLD **93%**

Fixing The Flicker

Flickering interlaced screens can be a headache, quite literally.

Jason Holborn shows you how to put an end to the flickering misery.

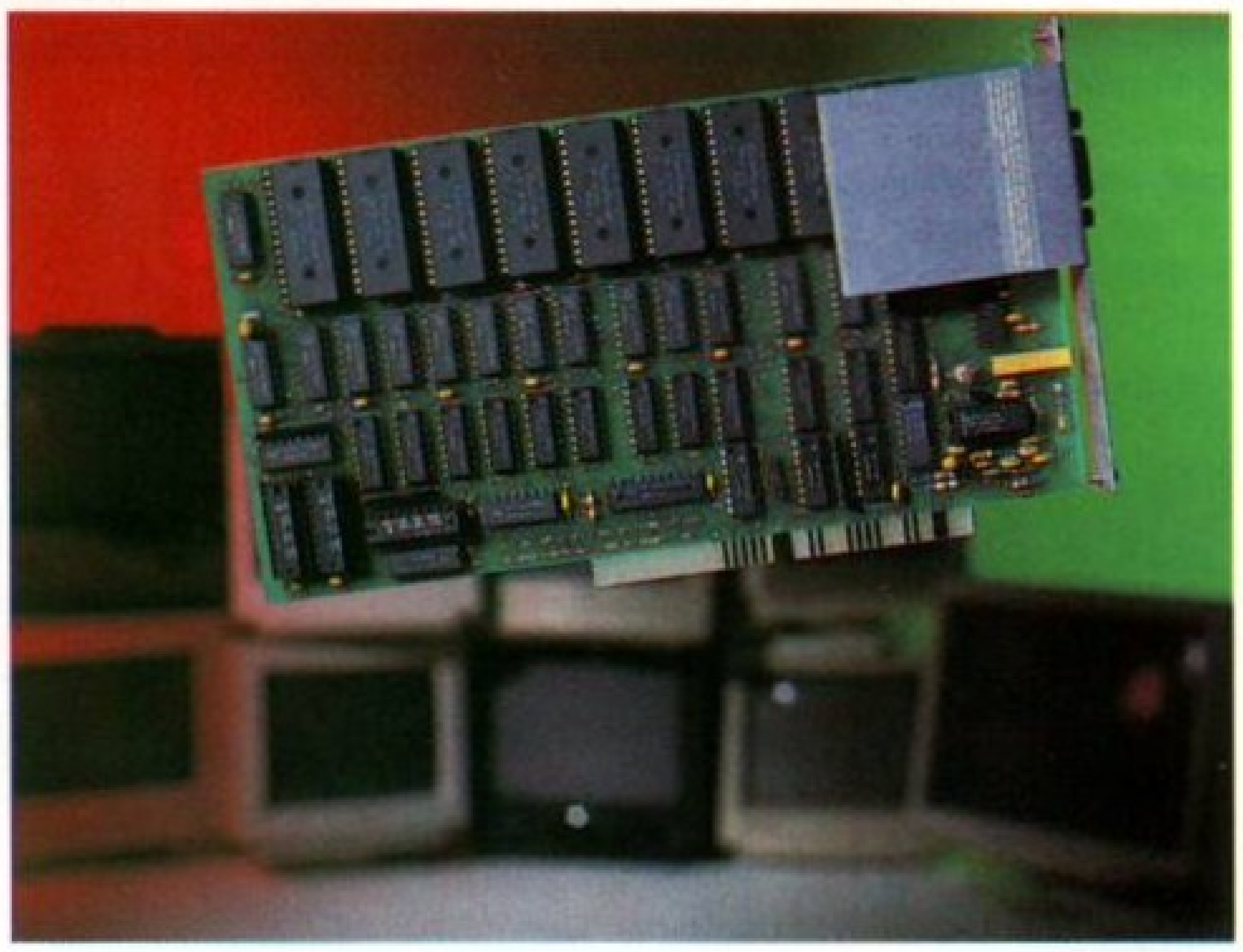
IF YOU'VE EVER tried to run a program that opens a high-resolution screen, then you'll no doubt have already fallen foul of the perils of interlacing. To most of us, interlaced screens are very annoying and can cause considerable eye strain (unless you're wearing a decent pair of shades).

You may be wondering what possessed Commodore to build interlacing into the Amiga's display hardware in the first place, but, believe it or not, they had their reasons. Interlacing is very important within the video industry and therefore the Amiga's ability to generate an interlaced signal has helped it to capture the market with ease.

That's good for videophiles, but what about the rest of us? Thankfully, there are ways of reducing and even removing flicker. If you can afford a multisync monitor like those reviewed on pages 124/5 of this issue, then the first thing you can do is upgrade your machine to the new enhanced chip set and Workbench 2.0. The ECS upgrade includes a new non-interlaced screen mode called 'productivity' that can display a 640 by 480 pixel image without a flicker in sight. Unfortunately, you need a multisync to use it.

To remove the flicker from standard screen modes, a number of third party manufacturers produce flicker fixer cards that remove interlacing by re-synchronising the video signal. Again, you need a multisync to use these new non-interlaced screen modes. The A3000 already has a flicker fixer as standard, in the shape of the CBM Display Enhancer, but this is not available to those of us with lower spec Amigas. Coming to the rescue though are MicroWay Europe and ICD, both of which market flicker fixers.

MicroWay's Flicker Fixer (£125 from MicroWay Europe — 081-541 5466) has been available for a number of years now, but a recent £200 price drop has finally brought it within reach of the average user. The Flicker Fixer comes in the form of a plug-in card for the Amiga 1500 and 2000 that connects to the Amiga via the video slot. Sticking out of the back is a standard nine-pin 'D' socket that is used to channel the output from the card to a standard multisync monitor. As it stands though, the connector that the Flicker Fixer uses is non-standard, so an adaptor cable will have to be made up to enable your multisync to address the Flicker Fixer. Thankfully, MicroWay do include comprehensive information on the pin-outs of both the Flicker Fixer and a range of commonly-available multisyncs (although more recent models aren't included), so getting a cable made up shouldn't prove to be too much of a problem.



The Microway Flicker Fixer's big price drop has brought it within the average Amiga user's price range.

The Flicker Fixer converts all standard (non-ECS) screen modes, even those that aren't interlaced, to a higher sync RGB signal with a horizontal sync speed of 31.5KHz (double the standard speed). Flicker Fixer also removes visible scan lines, giving you an image that's as steady as a rock. It can also handle the Amiga's full 4,096-colour palette, giving access to some of the most beautiful Amiga displays that you're likely to encounter. MicroWay planned to produce an A500 version, but to date nothing has turned up.

A500 owners can put an end to Flicker problems with ICD's Flicker Card (£250 from Silica Systems – 081-309 1111). This internally-fitting card works in a very similar fashion to the MicroWay unit and provides much the same features. Once again, for serious A500 users, the ICD card is a must.

Fixing Flicker on the Cheap

If your budget doesn't stretch to the price of a multisync and flicker fixer, then don't despair — there are still a couple of things that you can do to reduce flicker to a more acceptable level. Although it is impossible to remove flicker completely if you're running interlaced screens on a standard single-scan monitor or SCART TV, follow these simple guidelines and you'll find interlacing to be less of a problem.

SCREEN FILTERS — a screen filter provides a very low-cost method of reducing screen flicker without having to change your monitor or TV. They come in two forms: mesh filters and the more expensive polarised filters, both of which fit on the front of any standard TV or monitor to reduce glare.

Mesh filters use a very fine mesh that reduces glare by reducing the amount of light that reaches the eye. Unfortunately, mesh filters can often reduce the the picture clarity too, which makes them less useful. If you've got £30 to spare, then a much better bet is the more effective polarised filter – a piece of polarised perspex between you and the glare of your monitor. As any photographer will tell you, passing a bright image through a polarised filter reduces the glare of the image without affecting its contrast.

COLOURS — interlace flicker can be reduced without having to spend any money, simply by keeping a watchful eye on the colours that an application uses. Generally, flicker can be avoided by using colours that have a low contrast, so avoid high-contrast colour combinations. In particular, try to avoid black on white. Instead, reduce the intensity of the white to a medium grey (RGB 888). By playing around with different palettes, you'll notice a considerable reduction in interlace flicker.

SUPPLIERS the monitors reviewed on these pages are available from:

Monitor	Supplier	Phone
Book TV	Philips	081-689 4444
Philips Cube TV	Philips	081-689 4444
Philips CM8833	Philips	081-689 4444
CBM 1084S	Calculus	0543 416626
CBM 1085S	Calculus	0543 416626
Philips 7CM3209	Philips	081-689 4444
CBM 1960	Calculus	0543 416626
Commodore 21FST	Calculus	0543 416626
NEC 4FG	NEC	081-993 9831
Philips TV Adaptor	Philips	081-689 4444

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52QMB 8MB	**£599**	105QMB 8MB	**£719**

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For A1500/A2000
Bare **£199**

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52QMB 2MB	**£339**	105QMB 2MB	**£539**
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52QMB 8MB	**£469**	105QMB 8MB	**£749**

GVP G-Force

68030 Accelerator board
68882 Maths co-processor

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Chips

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1MB x 1DRAM **£3.95** 1MB x 8Simm **£30** 1 x 4 Zip **£19.95**

A3000 Static column RAM **£22**
Simm 32 x 1MB-60 **£65** (suitable for GVP A500)
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2.04 Kickstart ROM chip, workbench software, install disk 2.04, font disk & extras **£99.95**
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Compatible with Amiga, PC, Mac. A SCSI controller is required on the Amiga and PC

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768 x 580 quality resolution
16.8 million colour frame buffer
Small easy to fit circuit board
Overlay Amiga graphics & animations
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Allows picture in picture **£599** (includes TV Paint)

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Up to 8MB RAM on board
For A1500/2000
Bare **£199**

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52QMB 2MB	**£339**	105QMB 2MB	**£539**
52QMB 4MB	**£399**	105QMB 4MB	**£599**
52QMB 8MB	**£469**	105QMB 8MB	**£749**

Progressive Peripherals

Progressive 040/3000

28MHz Motorola 68040
Directly accesses 32-bit memory on A3000 Over
Four times the speed of a standard A3000
AmigaDOS 2.0 compatible
4MB **£999**

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28MHz Motorola 68040
Built-in maths co-processor
Expandable up to 32MB of RAM
Software compatible with 68000 processors
4MB **£1295**

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For the Amiga 500
28MHz 68040 with processor
Up to 40 times the speed of the standard A500
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Easy to fit, no soldering
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Fast SCSI-2 DMA hard drive controller
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Rembrandt

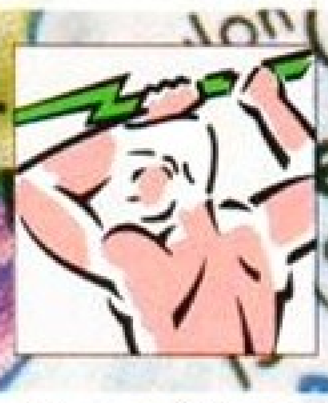
24-bit colour
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The Amiga can pretend to be almost any other computer, but probably the most desirable is Apple's 'designer machine', the Macintosh. **Asam Ahmad** rubs his hands in glee as a touch of emulator magic turns his Amiga into a Mac...

AMax-II Plus

ReadySoft Incorporated ■ £324.99



Amiga virtues aside, sceptics have always complained 'it's not a Macintosh'. Now you have the power to prove them all wrong. AMax-II Plus gives you that power.

THE WAIT IS over. AMax-II Plus, the long-awaited Apple Macintosh emulator for the Amiga 1500 and above, is here at last.

It's been on the way for a year now and we've been salivating constantly while waiting for it. Why? Because it promises features that could make it the best emulator ever created. Let's see how it fulfils that promise...

The first release of AMax, reviewed way back in *Amiga Format* Issue One, we described as "one of the best emulators available on any machine." Since then AMax has been through numerous upgrades. The improvements have mainly been in the software department, to improve the way in which it runs Mac software and to add extra features, such as direct hard-drive support.

AMax-II is available from Entertainment International 0268 541126

The exciting new version involves both new hardware and a software upgrade (version 2.5) which can be used by existing AMax owners. The software makes full use of all available facilities in the Amiga, such as ECS and extra chip/fast memory, and compatibility is improved to allow the use of the new System 7 software for the Macintosh. The most exciting part, though, is the hardware upgrade.

The new hardware comes in the shape of a Zorro-II card, for plugging into any Amiga 1500/2000 or 3000 system, though, you still need to get hold of a set of 128K Macintosh ROMs to get it working.

One new feature is that you can now use Macintosh-format floppy disks in your Amiga drives. This was a major failing of the old system, because your software had to be transferred mainly by serial port access — the 'mini-disk' that you were supposed to set up and use for transferring software only held 272K so it was pretty useless.

Technically, reading Mac disks in an Amiga drive is a complex and very clever achievement – it uses a custom drive controller on the Plus board – and this is the reason AMax-II Plus took a year to perfect.

Macintoshes use variable speed drives — so depending on where the heads of the drive are, the disk will spin at a different speed to read the data at that point. Apart from that, the Macintosh uses a type of data encoding known as GCR, whereas the Amiga uses MFM encoding. The drive controller on the board allows the drives to overcome this difference.

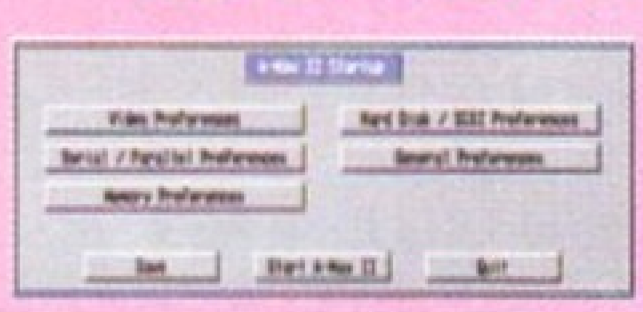
The board comes with two RS-422 comms ports, which enable the connection of Apple printers, modems and MIDI equipment. Apple network software also works, so you can connect to other Macs and network devices.

Another new feature is the ability to use Macintosh SCSI devices by connecting them to your SCSI hard-drive controller. This isn't restricted to the Plus board, and increases the usability of AMax-II no end, enabling the addition of scanners and other devices to improve your Mac system.

Setting up is fairly simple. The card just plugs into any vacant slot. The only delicate part is re-routing the internal drive cable to go through the AMax-II board, and then back to the Amiga motherboard.

The AMax-II Plus software allows you to configure how the emulator will work and

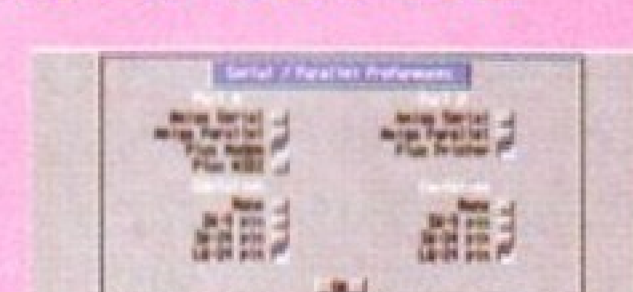
SET-UP SCREENS: TAKING CONTROL OF AMAX-II



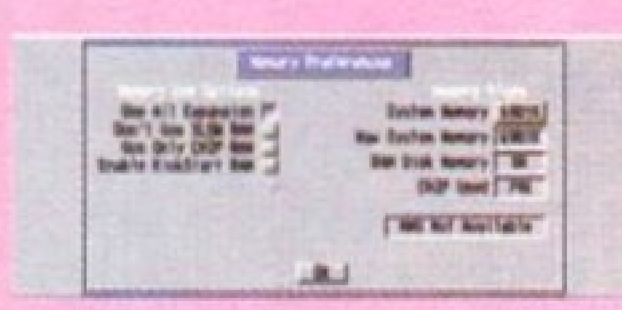
This is the main control panel that allows you to select which parts of AMax-II you want to configure.



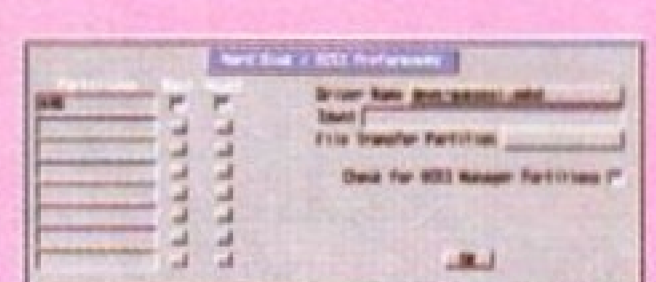
From this panel you can control the screen modes you want to use, plus create virtual screens.



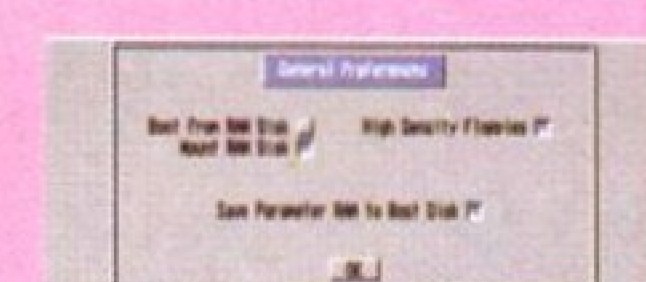
Selecting the emulation mode and choosing Modem or MIDI mode is a case of selecting a few buttons.



Memory control is very important for running large applications and must be set up correctly from here.



This is Hard-Drive/SCSI interface set-up screen. You will need to copy the relevant hard drive into DEVS:.



This panel gives you the option to control whether or not a RAM Disk is mounted and the use of HD disks.



what facilities it will use, such as extra memory and hard-drive partitions you have set aside for AMax. It also allows you to mount a Macintosh RamDisk for saving files to and to use Kickstart memory if you have an A1000.

The first thing to do, once the emulator is running, is to get hold of a system disk. AMax should work with all systems up to 7.0.1 for the Mac, and it works fine on System 6 and 7. Once you have booted up your Mac, you can set up your hard drive etc, to your configuration, so it will boot up from it next time. AMax-II comes with various hard-drive controllers to enable you to use most of the popular drives and controllers around.

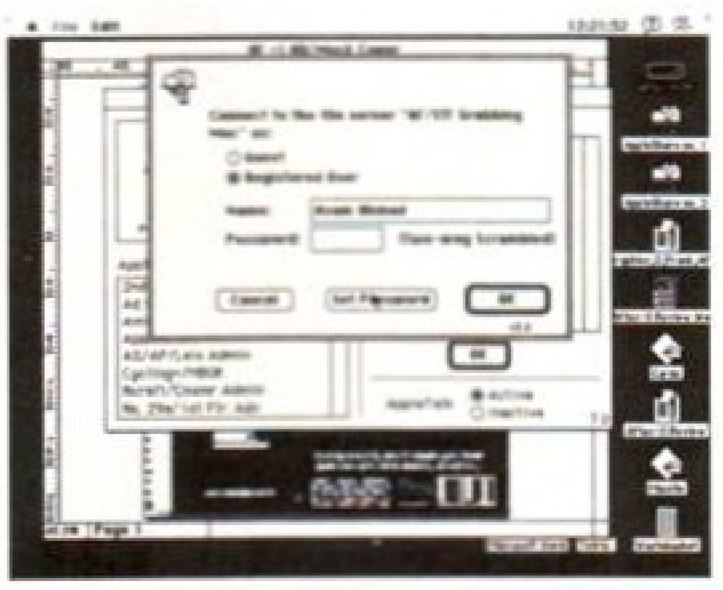
Software compatibility is excellent, with AMax happily running *QuarkXpress* 3.1, *GreatWorks* 2.0, *MicroSoft Word* 4, in fact just about anything you throw at it. It won't complain, except when memory is running low.

Ideally you need at least 4Mb of memory for any serious use (AMax supports up to ten) although you can just about scrape through with one meg, but only if it is all chip RAM so that it is in one contiguous chunk (memory that's in one big free block). Theoretically, the only things that would not work are pieces of software that hit the hardware directly, such as some games that use custom chips. (*Tetris* works fine, though.)

SEE HOW SHE RUNS: MAC SOFTWARE COMPATIBILITY



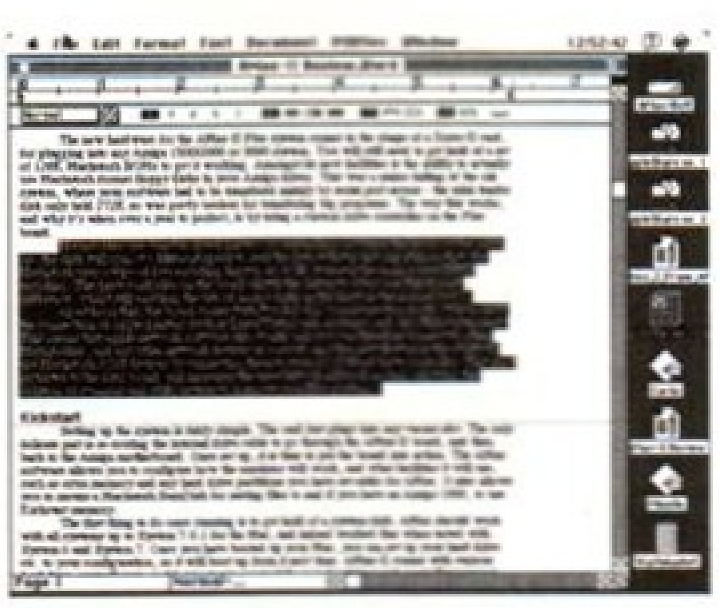
This screen was originally laid out on a Macintosh and used for the cover of *Amiga Format* issue 35. Here, *QuarkXpress* 3.1 is running happily on the Amiga, and has all the capabilities to edit and print any document as a Mac would. Funnily enough, *QuarkXpress* on AMax-II Plus actually runs faster than *PageStream* or *ProPage* on the Amiga. The question is, why?



The emulation for connecting to AppleTalk or other devices directly, such as LaserWriters, is excellent because of the hardware that is incorporated on the board. Here AMax is connecting to one of our AppleShare servers that houses files for common use by the magazine's editorial and printing departments.



Here AMax is connected to the *Amiga Format* section of AppleShare. The board is able to transfer data to and from AppleShare perfectly, and at an admirable rate. Using AppleTalk on a local area network you can connect to any other Macintosh, printer, fax device or other output/input devices with ease.



Running *MicroSoft Word* 4 on AMax makes you wonder why Amiga software isn't written this way. The program runs quickly and is far more user friendly than most Amiga word processors, and after all, it is running on an Amiga. What are Amiga programmers doing wrong that Macintosh programmers are doing right?



During the writing of *Amiga Format*, files are written on various Macs around the building. In order to make life easy, we use a system whereby files can be passed around the office without the need for disks. By using Public Folders (a system extension that operates within the AppleTalk protocol) files can be copied from one Mac to another.

AppleTalk emulation is superb. The AMax system connects to the network we have here at Future Publishing as if it is a real Mac. It happily accesses any of our LaserWriters and connects to our AppleShare network without any problems whatsoever. This feature of the board alone opens up a wealth of possibilities, and can make Amiga-Mac transfers so simple.

AMax can also use 1.76Mb high-density drives connected to your system, so that it can read high-density Mac-format disks. The drive controller is very comprehensive and so good it can even access MS-DOS disks through *Apple File Exchange.*

There is one problem, though, with the File Transfer software supplied with AMax. This is supposed to allow you to read AmigaDOS hard drive partitions or 880K AmigaDOS disks in the drives while still in Mac mode (similar to Apple File Exchange with MS-DOS 720k disks). The software seems to run OK, but crashes whenever it gets to the transfer control panel. ReadySoft are aware of this and say it will be corrected with the full-release version.

This really is the best emulator we've seen for the Amiga. It is just so compatible with the real thing, and behaves just as if you really were using a Mac. In fact the only things that remind you that you are not, is the Amiga keyboard and mouse. Every piece of software we put on test works beautifully on it.

There are restrictions to the board: the only display that you will ever have is a mono screen, but you can set up this screen to be larger than your visible screen size, and create a virtual scrolling screen up to 2,048 by 2,048 pixels in size. This can be useful for editing large pictures or pages in a DTP program.

The documentation is small and to the point, but doesn't explain everything as well it could: and there is no index, only a contents list, which can be a little frustrating.

It has taken time, but ReadySoft have created something very special to open the world of the Mac to Amiga users. AMax is a joy to use and it brings you the power of choice. The Amiga shouldn't have to emulate another machine to be considered 'professional', but it does. Very well.

AMax-II Plus

SPEED ●●●●
Runs as fast as your processor does, with very little system overhead. 68020/030 compatible.

DOCUMENTATION ●●●
The manual is good but a little short. Some of the features need explaining in greater depth.

ACCESSIBILITY ●●●●●
If you've had previous Mac experience, you'll feel right at home here. The emulation is superb.

FEATURES ●●●●●
Full support for all SCSI Mac peripherals and the ability to read Mac disks in your drives .

VALUE ●●●●
For £324.99 plus the price of ROM chips, you've got a fully fledged Mac, on top of your Amiga.

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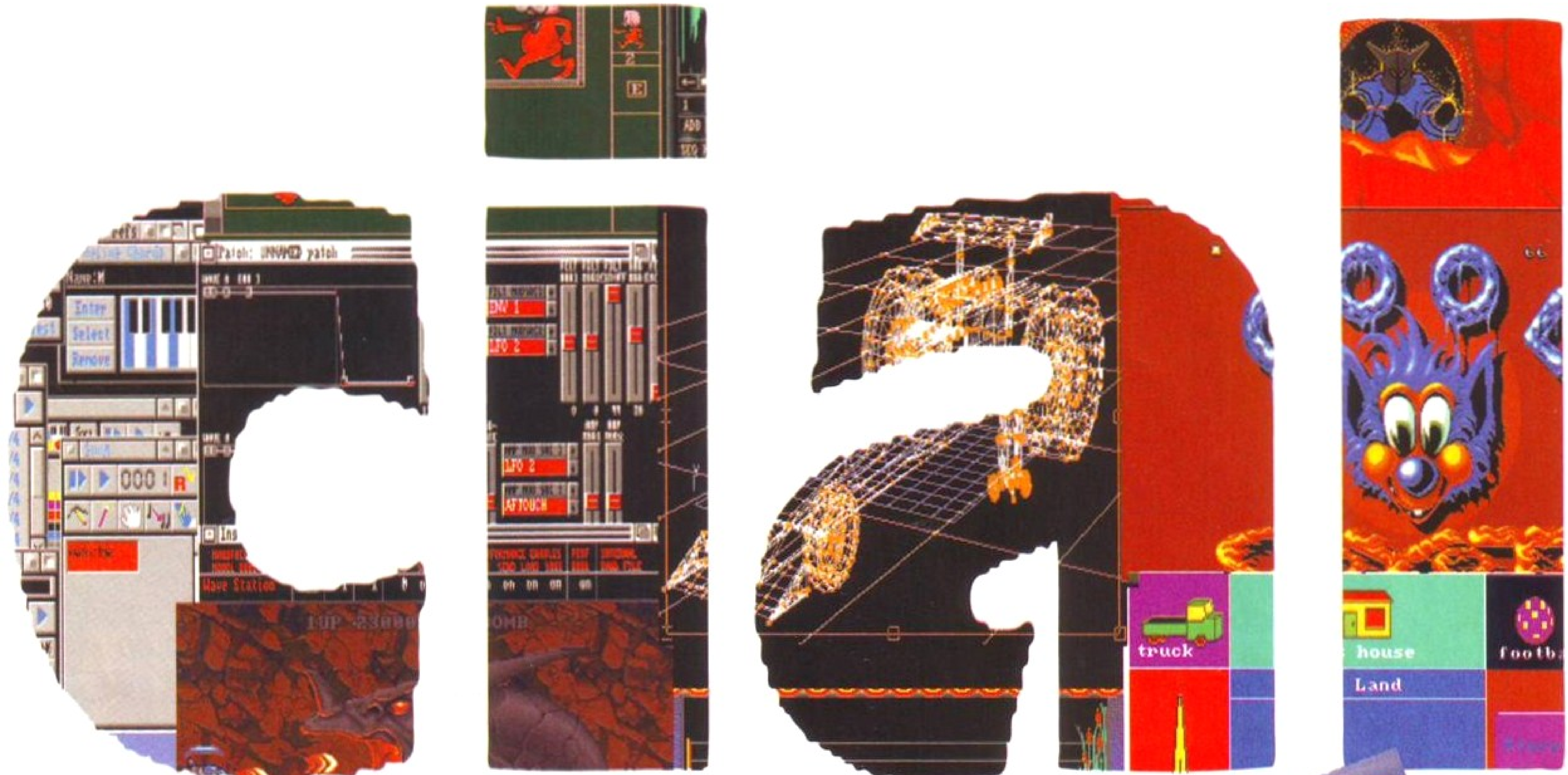
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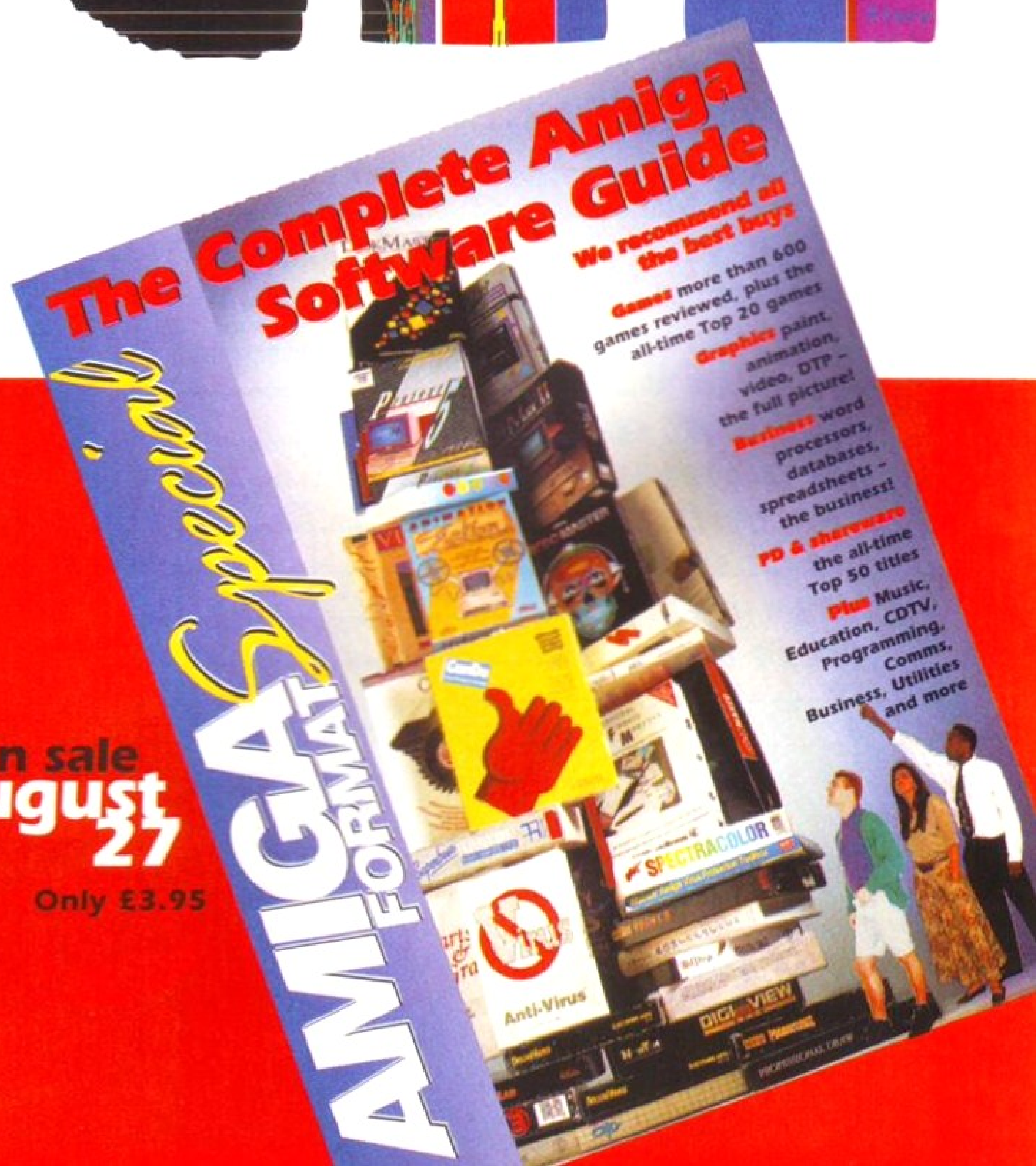
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Keep in touch with a modem

Comms can be lots of fun. But can also be a daunting field to get into. **Asam Ahmad** and **Tim Howell** offer an overview of what you need.



Modems galore! Of course you don't need seven modems connected to your Miggy to reach out in to the world of comms, but here at *Amiga Format* we do like to go totally overboard...

IN THE PAST they've been called the ultimate expansion. The small boxes we call modems have opened up a whole new world for Amiga owners.

A modem is more than just a piece of hardware you bolt on to your machine. Modems enable you to connect to other computers over the phone line and, in combination with comms software, means you can talk to other Amiga owners and even get hold of PD software in a matter of minutes, rather than days.

The modem translates the digital information that you transmit from your Amiga and turns it into audio noises which can be sent down a phone line. The modem at the other end receives these noises and then converts them back into digital data, so the computer running at that end can make use of them.

Okay, so now we know what a modem is, but why is comms becoming so popular? What does comms have to offer the average Amiga user that can't be found elsewhere?

One of the main reasons comms is so popular is that it puts Amiga owners directly in touch with other Amiga owners. By logging on to bulletin boards (BBSs) they can leave messages, obtain the latest PD and shareware software soon after it's released and get to know other Amiga owners – yes, even stuck at home you don't have to be anti-social...

Bulletin boards are computers that are set up to act as storage areas for messages and files, enabling other users equipped with modems to call them over the phoneline and access these resources. BBSs, as they're commonly called, get their name from the bulletin boards found in US schools, pieces of wood that anyone can stick a piece of paper to in order to convey information to other people.

While BBSs can store messages, enabling you to contact other Amiga owners locally or even around the world, they can also store the latest files and information on the Amiga, putting you at the forefront of technology and keeping you up to date on the Amiga scene.

Being in touch with other Amiga owners can go even a step further when you play multi-user games. Multi-user games are games that are run on large computers that enable many players to take part in a giant game all at once, playing with or against each other. For once your opposition in a game is intelligent!

These games started to appear several years ago, starting with *MUD*, the *Multi User Dungeon*, which pitted players in a medieval fantasy scenario, much like a real-life *Dungeons and Dragons* game but with participants playing from all around the country.

More recently we've had *Air Warrior*, the multi-user flight simulator which uses detailed graphics to portray the action on-screen. In the game you fly around the large polygon-graphic world, battling and avoiding other users who play the game at the same time.

You see the action as you create it, and because of the detailed graphics and the human element, it seems more real than most other games – while a game like *F-15 Strike Eagle* may simulate a plane more accurately, the knowledge that you're playing against other, real people gives the gameplay that extra edge. All you need to play the game is a modem and a copy of Air Warrior which we gave away with Issue 32 (see Back Issues on page 186, to get your own copy), although you do have to pay a subscription fee for the amount of time you play the game, as well as your phone bill.

JARGON BUSTING

There's a complete guide to modem jargon (and there's a lot of it about!) on Page 138, but for the time being there is one vital comms term you have to know. BAUD.

It basically measures how fast a modem is. Baud is the actual rate at which two serial devices are linked, eg 2400 baud which roughly translates into 240 characters per second. Do not confuse this with throughput which is measured in bits per second and is the actual amount of data being transferred, accounting for compression. Therefore 2400 baud is 2400 bps with no compression, but 9600 bps with 4:1 compression turned on.

To get out and about in the comms world you need to have three important pieces of equipment: a modem, a phone line and some terminal software.

As you will see over the pages there are a number of good quality modems available which can be used on your Amiga. Depending on what you want to use the modem for determines which modem you should go for. Features such as speed and compression play an important part in this decision.

For a modem to be any use at all (except as a door stop) it needs to be connected to a phone line. Most modems are simply plugged into standard wall-sockets like a phone. What you need to watch out for when you're on-line is how quickly your phone bill can rise.

Time, as they say, is money, and unless you're keen on increasing British Telecom's earnings to £100 a second then you'll have to be aware of how much time you spend on-line. Buying a faster modem, and one that is capable of MNP compression, can save money in the long-term even if you shell out more initially. It really comes down to how seriously you want to get into comms...

The final element is getting hold of some comms software. This is software that enables your Amiga to act as a terminal and to send the data you type on the keyboard through the serial port to the modem, and then to interpret the data that comes back to you from the computer at the other end of the phoneline.

There are a number of commercially-available comms programs available for the Amiga, but the best programs are found in the public domain. NComm 2 (on disk PU171 from Vally PD, PO Box 15, Peterlee, Co Durham SR8 1NZ 091-587 1195) is the best comms program available for the Amiga and is regularly updated to ensure it's state of the art.

Once you've got your modem, your phone line and the software you need to make all the bits work with each other, a whole new world awaits you. But before you can become part of this world, you do need a modem, so read on and let ***Amiga Format*** help show you which one to choose...

DATAFLEX DESIGN POCKET BISCOM

£249 + VAT
DAYTONA COMMUNICATIONS LTD
0494 474799



Great! A portable modem! Now all I need is a portable Amiga to connect it to...

The Pocket Biscom can plug directly into the RS232C port on your machine without the need for a connecting cable, and it's approved by mother BT.

The casing is featureless, except for the sockets and a battery warning LED on the underside. This is difficult to see – generally the first sign you get that the battery is a bit clapped out is a display full of garbled characters. The lack of indicator lights of course means that unless you have intelligent comms software you can't precisely work out exactly what's going inside the little beast, unless you are clairvoyant.

The Biscom comes with a 9v power supply which plugs into a tiny socket. The power unit is a single block incorporating the mains plug. Sadly, it's a 2-pin plug which requires an adaptor (not supplied) to fit into UK mains sockets safely. Considering the fact that this modem is BT approved and made for use in the UK by a UK company, this is a bit strange.

The Biscom is supplied with a lead to connect it to the telephone network, but there is no second socket to enable you to keep your phone connected while you're using the modem. Then again, considering that this is meant as a portable modem, this is not too surprising.

PC comms software is provided, but that's no use to us Amiga people. A ring-bound manual and a Hayes command reference card is also supplied. It comes in a red carrying case which can accommodate the power supply, modem and all the leads and paperwork.

If you need portability and can afford it, this is the modem for you, otherwise your best bet would be to stick to a normal deskbound modem.

Pocket Biscom

DOCUMENTATION ●●●●
Pretty good, with clear instructions and a good command summary available to boot.

ACCESSIBILITY ●●
Very basic. No information LEDs mean that you have to almost guess what the thing is doing.

FEATURES ●●
Only three speeds, V21, V22 and V22bis, make this a poor performer in this category.

VALUE ●●
Expensive for what it is. The only attraction here is the fact it is portable.

AMIGA FORMAT Verdict 63%

HYUNDAI HMD2401

£99 INC VAT
PERSONICS
0252 311332



Despite being unapproved, this is a decent modem that works well. Now, where's that spare tyre?

The HMD2401 has a reasonable manual which manages to describe what you need to do to get up and running despite a few Japlish problems. There's a quick reference card included. The PC software included is again is no use to us.

Like many Japanese and American modems the HMD2401 is not BT-approved and, although it seems to operate perfectly well, it is not strictly legal to use it on BT's telephone network. It also comes with a two-pin European style power adaptor, but thankfully it is supplied with a three-pin socket adaptor for UK use.

However, in terms of operation the HMD2401 conforms to most of BT's rules governing bell-ringing circuitry and data transmission speeds, so you will be unlucky to encounter any problems due to the lack of approval. This modem doesn't support advanced features like flow control, so you will have to either manually change your speed once connected, or if your software is intelligent enough it might be able to detect the speed from the transmitted CONNECT message. It's a basic no-frills piece of hardware that'll get the job done.

The price is very low for a modem of this standard, giving you a throughput of up to 2400 baud, but unfortunately there is no error correction or compression built into it so it can be prone to line noise if your line connection is not at its best. Nevertheless, if you are an infrequent comms user and only log on occasionally for picking up news or mail on a board and don't need the ability to transfer large files often, this is a good choice for a cheap but functional modem.

Hyundai HMD2401

DOCUMENTATION ●●
All the basic information is there, if a little unclearly written, with a reference card.

ACCESSIBILITY ●●●
Has a good set of LEDs to show what is going on and works well.

FEATURES ●●●
It has everything a modem of this spec and this price could be expected to have. Cheap no-frills stuff.

VALUE ●●●●●
Bearing all of this in mind, it is good value for money. A good inexpensive modem.

AMIGA FORMAT Verdict 74%

PACE ULTRALINK QUAD

£399 + VAT
PACE MICRO TECHNOLOGY
0274 532000



Great modem, shame about the price – it really is quite extortionate. The modem is unnecessarily big too.

At over £400, you'd expect something pretty good and the Ultralink Quad is certainly very competent. It's in a class of its own for presentation and performs well.

The casing is a grey plastic box with a sloping front panel. Instead of LEDs, the Ultralink Quad has a large LCD display which shows all the information you need as text. The CCITT connection standard and MNP level are immediately obvious: even the telephone number you dialled is displayed. The only problem with the LCD panel is the fact that the information is only visible when looked at directly — and of course it is not illuminated, so you can't see it in the dark.

But the Ultralink Quad doesn't just look good; it works well enough to carry all the necessary BT-approval stickers. Even the UK-style 3-pin mains adaptor has BT approval and the phone cable is built in with a socket for your phone, so you won't endanger your line-rental contract with BT.

The Ultralink Quad can handle all levels of MNP standards up to level 5 as well as the newer (and better) CCITT V42 LAPM system. This can increase the speed of data-transfer by 400 per cent when connected to an LAPM-compatible modem at the other end. It also supports flow control.

It's a lot of money, £400, but this modem is good. However considering your maximum throughput is only 9600 as opposed to 38400 or 57600 bps a la Supra, you may be tempted to go for the faster modems without thinking twice. Indeed why pay more for less? It may have BT approval but given the fact that other, faster modems start at half the price…

Pace Ultralink Quad

DOCUMENTATION ●●●●
Great manuals, telling you everything you need to know in a clear manner.

ACCESSIBILITY ●●●
The LCD display shows you a lot of information and is good in this respect.

FEATURES ●●●●
V21, V22, V23 and V22bis as well as MNP 4 and 5 and LAPM compression.

VALUE ●●●
Although the spec is quite impressive, the price is a little too high.

AMIGA FORMAT Verdict 66%

AMSTRAD SM24000

£125
CENTRESOFT
021 625 3388



A good looking modem that functions as well as it needs. Nice low price makes it a good choice for beginners.

This is the one of the first modems I started messing around in the world of comms with, many eons ago, but even by today's standards it's not a bad little performer. It has all speeds up to 2400 baud, but unfortunately no error correction or compression.

It comes in a typically computery style cream colour scheme and has an array of nine LEDs to indicate exactly what its up to, including two LEDs indicating if hardware handshaking is in progress.

It has a good manual, if a little thin, and all the essential information is there. It could do with a little more technical detail about the modem, however.

In operation the Amstrad conforms to all of BT's rules circuitry with full approval, so you will be unlucky to encounter any problems in that respect. This modem doesn't support flow control, so again you will have to either manually change your speed once connected, unless your software is intelligent enough detect the speed from the CONNECT message and change the terminal speed accordingly.

Again, like the Hyundai, the lack of error correction can make this modem prone to line noise. Apart from this, the modem performs well, and the bank of LEDs can prove informative, helping you to determine the cause of problems when connecting. It's also got a loudspeaker, so you can easily hear calls in progress.

As with the Hyundai, if you are an infrequent comms user and only log on occasionally, this is a good bet to gamble with, and of course it has BT approval, so can legitimately be used on the public switched telephone network.

Amstrad SM 24000

DOCUMENTATION ●●●●
Only a small manual, but it tells ou most things, albeit breifly.

ACCESSIBILITY ●●●
Good set of LEDs, and it also comes with a serial cable.

FEATURES ●●●●
Nothing special here, just a bog standard V22bis modem that works well.

VALUE ●●●
Considering the fact that this modem is approved and inexpensive, it is a good option.

AMIGA FORMAT Verdict **77%**

PACE LINNET QUAD

£349 + VAT
PACE MICRO TECHNOLOGY
0274 532000



Low spec, but high price. Approved or not, considering the price of the Amstrad which has the same spec...

This is little brother to The Ultralink and like it can handle all speeds up to 2400, including V23, so you can log on to Prestel-style viewdata boards.

One of the advantages that this modem has over all the other modems which don't have error correction (the cheaper ones) is what's called 'flow control'. This means you can set up your terminal speed at 2400 and let the modem buffer the data to the actual connect speed. This in itself is a feature that all modems should come with nowadays.

The casing is made up of some very rigid dark grey material, giving the impression of durability, and instead of the LCD panel on the Ultralink, it has a set of six LEDs telling you its current status and other basic information.

Again this modem has full BT approval so it can cheerfully be connected to the telephone network and as a result it costs more than the unapproved modems in the same price band.

There is not much to fault this modem: it is good in use, and the flow control facility means that you can connect to 1200/75 modems by using your normal software, even if it doesn't support v23.

Despite all these features, the fact remains that it is only a slowish 2400 modem and it doesn't support error correction or compression.

This makes it seem still rather expensive, especially considering the price of the Amstrad, which actually comes with BT approval. And you could, of course, buy the excellent Supra FAX modem or Supra 9600 for a lot less money…

Pace Linnet Quad

DOCUMENTATION ●●●●
Very good and well-written docs, conforming to the usual high standards that you can expect from Pace.

ACCESSIBILITY ●●●
Only basic LEDs for information, but the essential ones are included.

FEATURES ●●●●
Not many, just the usual for a 2400 modem with only the extra benefit of the flow control facility.

VALUE ●●●
Far too expensive for what it is. It is BT-approved, but then again so is the Amstrad...

AMIGA FORMAT Verdict **65%**

SUPRA 9600

£249 INC VAT
SUPRA CORPORATION VIA WTS
0582 491949



This modem's great. My personal advice is buy one. Buy two, it's so good. It's modem-mungus.

This modem will probably make you scream for joy the first time you use it. It features just about everything you would want in a modem, save BT approval.

The modem is well constructed, with a metal case and no less than nine LEDs to tell exactly what mode it's in and call progress. It's even got a multicolour LED to show you what speed it's currently operating at. Apart from all that, it's heavy, giving the impression of something meaty, solid and reliable.

It boasts all protocols up to 9600 baud, apart from the dated viewdata 1200/75 V23 standard, it has MNP error correction and compression mode 5 and, the cherry on the cake, LAPM correction to give a maximum throughput of up to 38400 bps!

In use, the modem is great, with hardware flow control, meaning you can leave your terminal program set at one speed and the modem buffers the data, and an auto fallback renegotiating system. This feature makes it possible to dial all BBSs at 9600 baud. When it connects, it negotiates with the other modem the highest speed and protocol they can both use and connects at the highest possible setting falling back to lower speeds if necessary.

Setting up the modem is a little tricky, with numerous extra command codes for setting up the error correction and so on, but once you have got the right settings and saved them to the modem's non-volatile memory, life is incredibly easy.

If you don't mind the lack of BT approval, given its low price and its high spec, buy it — this is just about one of the best modems you can get.

Supra 9600

DOCUMENTATION ●●●●
Excellent manual, very well written with lots of useful technical information as well.

ACCESSIBILITY ●●●
The array of variously-coloured LEDs tells you exactly what's happening and when.

FEATURES ●●●●
V21, V22, V22bis, V32 and MNP upto level 5 or LAPM correction and compression.

VALUE ●●●●
Great value for money. If you can afford it, buy it. It's a dream. The only problem is, it's now not to common.

AMIGA FORMAT GOLD **90%**

SUPRA FAXMODEM V32BIS

£259 FIRST CHOICE COMPUTERS 0532 319057



As its name suggests, this modem is capable of transmitting and receiving faxes. As well as this, it can provide you with V32bis modem speeds, that's 14400 baud to us, at up to four times correction and compression giving a theoretical maximum throughput of an astonishing 57600 bps!

Compared with its older counterpart the Supra 9600, this modem is about half the size and a lot lighter for what is: an even faster, sexier and all-round better piece of kit. Instead of an array of numerous LEDs, this modem has just four, indicating terminal ready, on hook and transmit or recieve. The rest of the information is displayed via a dot matrix two character panel which constantly cycles through the connect speed, compression mode and whether or not there is a carrier present by means of two letter abbreviations.

This modem also supports full flow control, allowing your terminal to be set at its maximum speed, and due to its fallback system can connect to just about any other modem around except HSTs and V23 modems. HST is a different 14400 standard and incompatible with V32bis 14400, but they can connect at a lower speed so all is not lost.

You can't really go wrong with this modem, it is fast and compatible with everything at some speed. Its fax facilities are an added plus, but you will need some fax software for this purpose such as the excellent *GPFax* software. Look out for a review of this Australian-originated program next month.

If you can stretch your budget to go this far, buy this modem. It is unapproved, but it is not every day you find a modem with the features it has at this price — you could pay over twice the price for just a modem this speed alone, without the fax facilities.

Supra FAXmodem

DOCUMENTATION ●●●●
Again, excellent. Great manual (though no fax details) and a reference card.

ACCESSIBILITY ●●●
The character panel tells you precisely its current mode and what its doing.

FEATURES ●●●●●
This modem has just about every single speed and compresion method around!

VALUE ●●●●●
For the price, and considering its FAX capabilities, it's a bargain.

AMIGA GOLD FORMAT **93%**

USEFUL BBS NUMBERS

This is by no means a comprehensive list of bulletin boards around, but just a selection of the most interesting ones. If these aren't enough, it is very easy to get hold of more numbers as most BBSs have some sort of list lying around in one of their file sections with literally hundreds for numbers. Watch your phone bill though... Happy communicating.

01 FOR AMIGA
071 377 1358
This is a good board with literally thousands of files for the Amiga, covering all aspects. It also has the entire collection of Fish PD disks archived for downloading. You can log on as a normal user, but for full access you will require membership at a minimal subscription fee each year.

CITIZEN'S ADVICE BUREAU
081 644 8714
A decent board with a large selection of Amiga files, as well as files for other computers. You do not need membership for this board, but your only restriction is that must upload a percentage of files for what you download.

NON-BABT APPROVED
0268 510495
Despite its name, this board is definitely recommended. It has a fairly wide selection of files of all sorts and doesn't need subscription either. It also, like most boards, has good mail facilities, especially through FidoNET which links up boards around the country.

THE END ZONE
0524 752245
This is one of my favourite boards. It has a vast domain of Amiga files as well as many special interest sections for DTP etc, and also Mac, ST and IBM sections. Membership is not compulsory on this board, but for access to a few sections, a small fee is asked for.

061 FOR AMIGA
061 799 4922
This board, as you may have guessed by the name, is based in Manchester. It has full mail facilities and a good selection of files. It also has a few online games which you can actually play in real time or against opponents who log on to the board. Great fun!

MNP, LAPM AND V32BIS, THAT MODEMS JARGON BUSTED!

Communication Protocols:
V21 — 300 baud communications
V22 — 1200 baud communications
V23 —1200/75 baud split rate communications
V22bis — 2400 baud communications
V32 — 9600 baud communications
V32bis — 14400 baud communications
HST — Another 14400 protocol, incompatible with V32bis however.
Connection Protocols:
MNP 2-4,10 — Microcom Networking Protocols that provides error correction.The higher the number, the better the error correction.
MNP 5 — MNP compression protocol up to 2:1
LAPM — An error correction protocol similar to MNP level 10.
BTLZ — BT Lempel Zev compression up to 4:1
V42 — MNP or LAPM error correction with the addition of MNP 5 compression
V42bis — LAPM error correction and BTLZ compression. The best connection you can get.
Hard techie type words:
Modem — MOdulator DEModulator. Converts digital signals to audio and back.
Local —Your computer or modem.
Remote — Computer/modem you're connected to.
Throughput — This is not the baud rate, but the actual transfer rate: so you can be connected at 9600 baud, but your throughput may be 38400 bps with V42bis.
Flow control — A bufferring system that allows your computer rate to be faster than the modem's baud rate to take advantage of compression.
Command set — Commands that tell the modem what to do. Based on the original Hayes command set and now expanded.
Telephone Bill — The bloke that comes around to your house to cut your line off if you are not careful. Solution: use someone else's line...tee hee!



ACTI...
M...

THE WORLDS...
CARTRIDGE IS...

NOW WITH A MASS...
IN ROM OFFERIN...
MK I...

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NEW **SUPER POWERFUL TRAINER MODE -**
now with DEEP trainer. Even better than before - allows you to generate more or even infinite lives, fuel, ammo. Perfect as a Trainer Mode to get you past that "impossible" level. Easy to use.

- **IMPROVED SPRITE EDITOR**
The full Sprite Editor allows you to view/modify the whole sprite set including any "attached" sprites. PLUS A RANGE OF IMPROVED FEATURES.

- **VIRUS DETECTION**
Comprehensive virus detection and removal features to protect your software investment. Works with all presently known viruses.

NEW **BURST NIBBLER.**
Now this super disk copier program is built into Action Replay Mk III. Just imagine a superfast, efficient disk copier program at the press of a key - no more waiting.

- **SAVE PICTURES AND MUSIC TO DISK**
Pictures and sound samples can be saved to disk. Files are saved directly in IFF format suitable for use with all the major graphic and music packages. Samples are displayed as screen waveform.

NEW **PAL or NTSC MODES SELECTABLE -**
Useful for removing ugly borders when using NTSC software. (Works only with newer Agnus chips).

- **SLOW MOTION MODE**
Now you can slow down the action to your own pace. Easily adjustable from full speed to 20% speed. Ideal to help you through the tricky parts!

NEW **MANY MORE INSTANT CLI COMMANDS -**
like Rename, Relabel, Copy, etc.

- **RESTART THE PROGRAM**
Simply press any key and the program will continue where you left off.

- **FULL STATUS REPORTING**
At the press of a key now you can view the Machine Status, including Fast Ram, Chip Ram, RamDisk, Drive Status, etc.

- **POWERFUL PICTURE EDITOR**
Now you can manipulate and search for screens throughout memory. Over 50 commands to edit the picture plus unique on screen status "overlay" shows all the information you could ever need to work on screens. No other product comes close to offering such dynamic screen handling of frozen programs!!

NEW **JOYSTICK HANDLER -**
allows the user to select Joystick instead of Keypresses - very useful for many keyboard programs.

- **MUSIC SOUND TRACKER**
With Sound Tracker you can find the complete music in programs, demos,etc. and save them to disk. Saves in format suitable for most track player programs. Works with loads of programs!!

- **AUTOFIRE MANAGER**
From the Action Replay III preference screen you can now set up autofire from 0 to 100%. Just imagine continuous fire power? Joystick 1 and 2 are set separately for that extra advantage!

NEW **IMPROVED RAM EXPANSION SUPPORT.**
Now many more external Ram Expansions will work with all Action Replay III commands.

- **DOS COMMANDS**
Now you have a selection of DOS commands available at all times - DIR, FORMAT, COPY, DEVICE, etc.

NEW **FILE REQUESTOR -**
if you enter a command without a filename, then a file requestor is displayed.

- **DISK COPY**
Disk Copy at the press of a button - faster than Dos Copy. No need to load Workbench - available at all times.

- **BOOT SELECTOR**
Either DF0 or DF1 can be selected as the boot drive when working with Amiga Dos disks. Very useful to be able to boot from your external drive.

NEW **PLUS IMPROVED DEBUGGER COMMANDS -**
including Mem Watch Points and Trace.

- **DISKCODER**
With the new "Diskcoder" option you can now 'tag' your disks with a unique code that will prevent the disk from being loaded by anyone else. 'Tagged" disks will only reload when you enter the code. Very useful for security.

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HOW TO GET YOUR ORDER FAST!

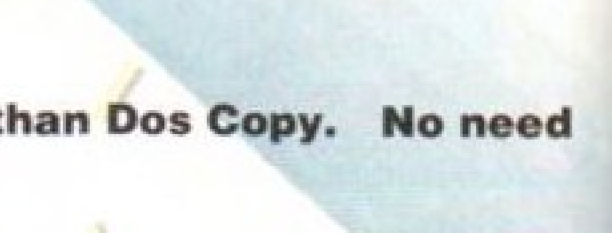
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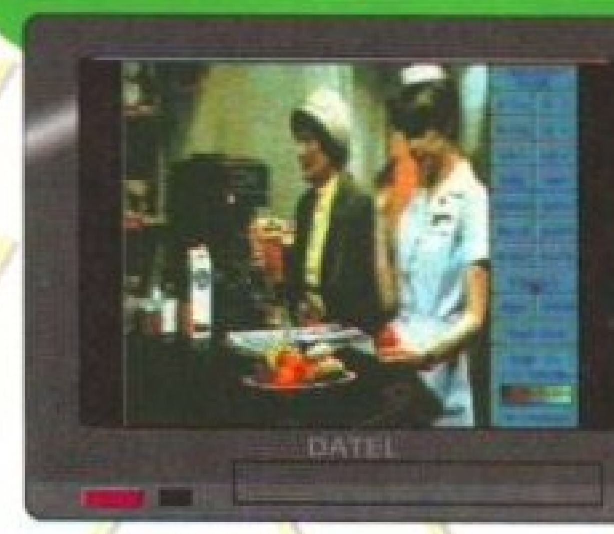
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- Unit plugs into expansion connector of Amiga 500, with through port for hard disk drives.



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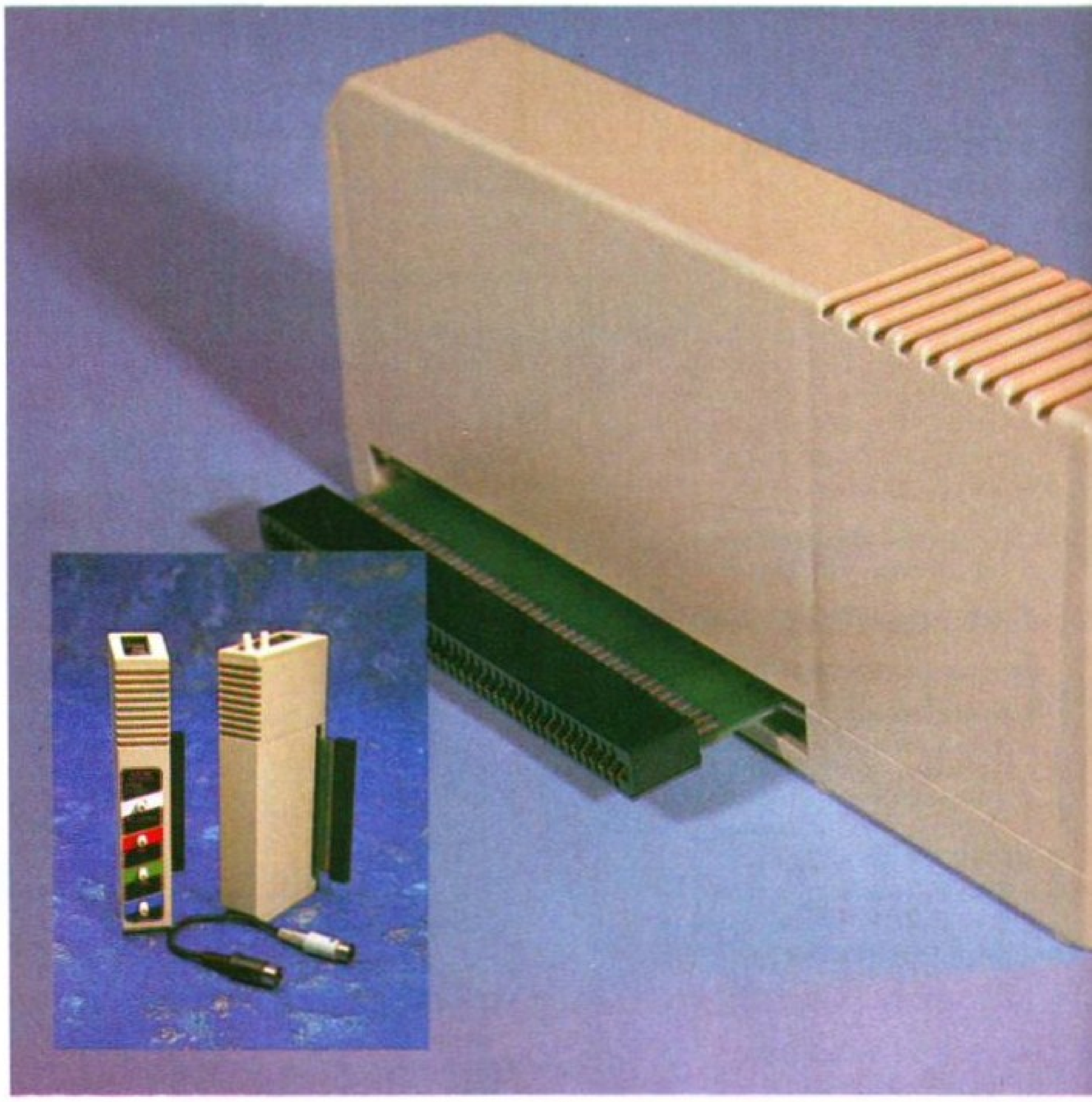
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DATEL LONDON SHOP

222, TOTTENHAM COURT RD, LONDON, W1. TEL:071 5806460

Colour digitising can be a nightmare, what with plastic filters, spinning wheels and all the confusing software. But **Neil Jackson** thinks he might have found a cheap way of avoiding all the hassle.



Realtime Colour Digitiser

Video grabber ■ £199.99 ■ Datel Electronics

TRADITIONALLY, DIGITISING IN colour is a hardware-orientated task, and a tricky one at that. Usually it involves three 'takes', one each for the red, green and blue colour components of the image, involving lots of messing about with coloured filters and taking up lots of time and trouble. Sure, things are easier with a 'real-time' colour digitiser system, but until now these have been outrageously expensive.

Datel's original digitiser was real-time and very good quality indeed, but it only worked in black and white. In this new package you find two plastic casings each roughly the size of a cigar box. One of these is the original mono digitiser: the other is an RGB splitter, which is designed to split a video signal into the red, green and blue the digitiser needs.

The system is let down by the rather cheap-looking boxes which contain it. They're a bit delicate and the knobs and connectors feel like they could break off too easily.

REALTIME DIGITISER is available from Datel Electronics 0782 744707

The RGB Splitter has knobs on the top of it which enable you to control the overall colour level (saturation) and also the individual colour levels. The video signal plugs into the back of the unit through a standard RCA/Phono connector, the type used on most household hi-fi systems.

The main hardware turns the analogue video signals into digital bits to make up your pictures. On the back of the box arethe brightness and contrast controls. The two boxes connect with a short flying lead (supplied) as well as through the expansion connectors.

The digitiser alternatives

If you're thinking of buying a digitiser and you don't think the Datel Colour system is the right one for you, here's what your options are.

MONO ONLY

DATEL VIDEO DIGITISER 2
£89.99 DATEL 0782 744707
Works in real time, is very easy to use and gives absolutely excellent results to boot: sharp, still frames with absolutely no noise. We just plugged it into the telly and got brilliant results straightaway. Good fun indeed.

***Amiga Format* rating 90%**

VIDI-AMIGA
£129.95 ROMBO 0506 414631
Real-time mono system that doesn't give the sharpest quality but has particularly useful animation features: it saves and plays back a sequence of 16 frames, which you can loop and colour. Also highly recommended.

***Amiga Format* rating 77%**

THREE-PASS COLOUR SYSTEMS

VIDI-CHROME
£19.95 ROMBO 0506 414631
Colour software upgrade for the mono Vidi-Amiga system, complete with colour filters, gives excellent results as Amiga HAM images: but remember, it's not real-time any more.

***Amiga Format* rating 86%**

COMPLETE COLOUR SOLUTION
£179 ROMBO 0506 414631
High-value combination of original Vidi-Amiga digitiser, Vidi-Chrome and also an RGB splitter which saves the hassle of colour grabbing by breaking the signal into constituent colours and makes the process quicker. Still not real-time.

***Amiga Format* rating 92%**

DIGIVIEW GOLD
£149.95 NEWTEK VIA
HB MARKETING 0753 686000
The 'original and best' colour system involves three-pass colour and the use of filters. Results are great if you take some care, and this system was the originator of high-res 'Dynamic HAM' mode. Also with the DigiView you get the *DigiPaint* HAM paint program free.

***Amiga Format* rating 90%**

MEDIASTATION
£159.95 NEWTEK VIA
HB MARKETING 0753 686000
More recent combined pack of the market-leading DigiView digitiser with two equally well-endowed software packages: *DigiPaint 3* and the animation utility *Elan Performer*. In actual fact it doesn't represent as good value, really.

***Amiga Format* rating 86%**

SNAPSHOT PRO
£585
HB MARKETING 0753 686000
This is a good digitiser – in fact it's a very good digitiser. It's a composite system, which means it can use a colour signal and doesn't need filters or a splitter. But it's very pricey considering it doesn't do colour in real time.

***Amiga Format* rating 78%**



Datel's colour video digitiser produces rather blurry results, regardless of the mode you choose. In 32+ mode (above) there's a lot of colour variation but it's better in HAM mode (below).



Set-up is tricky. The two boxes fit together using an Amiga expansion slot, but there's still a gap of about 5mm between them. This means they can flex, running the risk of cracking the connectors or boards, or momentarily disconnecting the signals passing through.

The adjustment knobs are tubes fitted on side-mounted potentiometers and they are a centimetre or so long– this means that as you apply pressure to twist them (and they're very stiff) you run the risk of bending the mountings or cracking the solder joints on the board. Not very robust and so they need to be handled carefully.

Another minor irritation is that there are no adjustment scales marked – not even a coloured mark on the knob – so it's impossible to see what the current settings are. Better quality knobs with more solid mountings and position markers would have been a simple and easy improvement – the budget approach doesn't inspire confidence.

Although the Datel system has a through port to enable a hard drive to plug in at the same time, it's not perfect. The size of the hole where the slot is located prevents you from fitting a GVP Impact II hard drive – the steel under-plate hasn't got anywhere to go. With the GVP Impact II being one of the most popular hard drives available, it's a gross oversight not to have allowed for it.

The system does all of its main digitising on a 32-colour, 256 pixel by 256 pixel screen. In repeat mode, it displays the incoming video signal roughly five times a second which is just about usable for moving images. In monitor mode, this frame-speed increases to 15 frames a second, but the display shrinks to a small window in the centre.

While the video signal is being displayed, the mouse action is interrupted, which is a bit of a pain. The pointer shoots around with time-lag and jerkiness while you attempt to operate the icons – and the icons themselves seem to get stuck momentarily, triggering off and on in a very annoying manner, until you let go at just the right moment.

To grab a frame, you must first switch to stop mode and then you can change the colour mode if you wish. There are four basic modes to choose from: 8-colour, 16-colour, 32-colour and HAM, with extra half-bright modes available on 8, 16 and 32 colour modes.

There are four less useful modes to show your incoming video signals in shades of pure red, green or blue, or plain old black and white. You can switch between all these modes to your heart's content, once the screen has stopped displaying the live video signal.

The actual digitising process is invisibly fast – as soon as you hit the stop button, you've captured an image in the digitiser's frame-store. Once it's there, you can work on it using the software's in-built menu features. These include the usual cut and paste, and a useful brush mode (which is exactly the same as the brush mode contained in *Deluxe Paint*).

There are also a few special effects which you can use to flip positive and negative images, turn the screen upside-down or shrink it by half horizontally or vertically. All very nice, but to be honest they're probably not all that much use. You're much more likely to do your image-manipulation in a proper art package which has a full screen display.

The manual is passable, but not really that helpful. It requires a bit of patience and jiggery-pokery to get things looking halfway decent, and a setting-up tutorial would have helped. Which knobs should you adjust first: brightness, contrast or colour saturation? More often than not, you end up juggling them around until you're fed up.

For the amount of work you need to put in to set it all up, the Datel system doesn't pay good enough dividends. The 32-colour mode is reasonable enough, but there's a good degree of signal noise which causes broken-up colour and an overall dotty effect. This is actually slightly worse when viewed in extra half-bright mode, occasionally giving a tartan feel to the whole image

Normal HAM mode is passable, but not good. There's a distinct jagginess appearance to the images, and sequential raster lines look as if they're made of slightly different shades. The Datel system digitises in 16 bits and the screen image is calculated from this data, even though it's actually displayed in six bitplanes because that's all the Amiga screen can actually manage.

The conversion process makes images look as if they're covered in differently coloured horizontal lines and these also appear on saved IFFs, so it's not just the screen display. You can save images as 24-bit or 16-bit IFF files, which is fine if you have a 16 or 24-bit art package to work on, but it's pretty pointless if all you have is *DPaint*.

I can't help thinking that you really do get what you pay for – the Datel system is cheap, and it shows. It's close to being a very good buy, but it's just a bit too ragged to be impressive or worthwhile. OK, so if there were a few better-quality components would have put the price up, but what good are cheap parts if they're in danger of falling off? If you can afford to buy a digitiser, save your pennies for something that will really get the job done well, rather than just done.

Datel Digitiser

SPEED ●●●
Grabbing couldn't be faster, but the trade-off is slow mouse control. Very jerky.

DOCUMENTATION ●●
A tacky manual lists the basic functions but doesn't really help if you're having problems.

ACCESSIBILITY ●●●
Simple to connect to Amigas with a meg of RAM or more. Has problems with some hard drives.

FEATURES ●●●
There are a few gimmicks and a few handy tools, overall functional with no real frills.

VALUE ●●●
At this price, there's nothing else, but the quality is a way short of professional gear.

AMIGA Verdict FORMAT **66%**

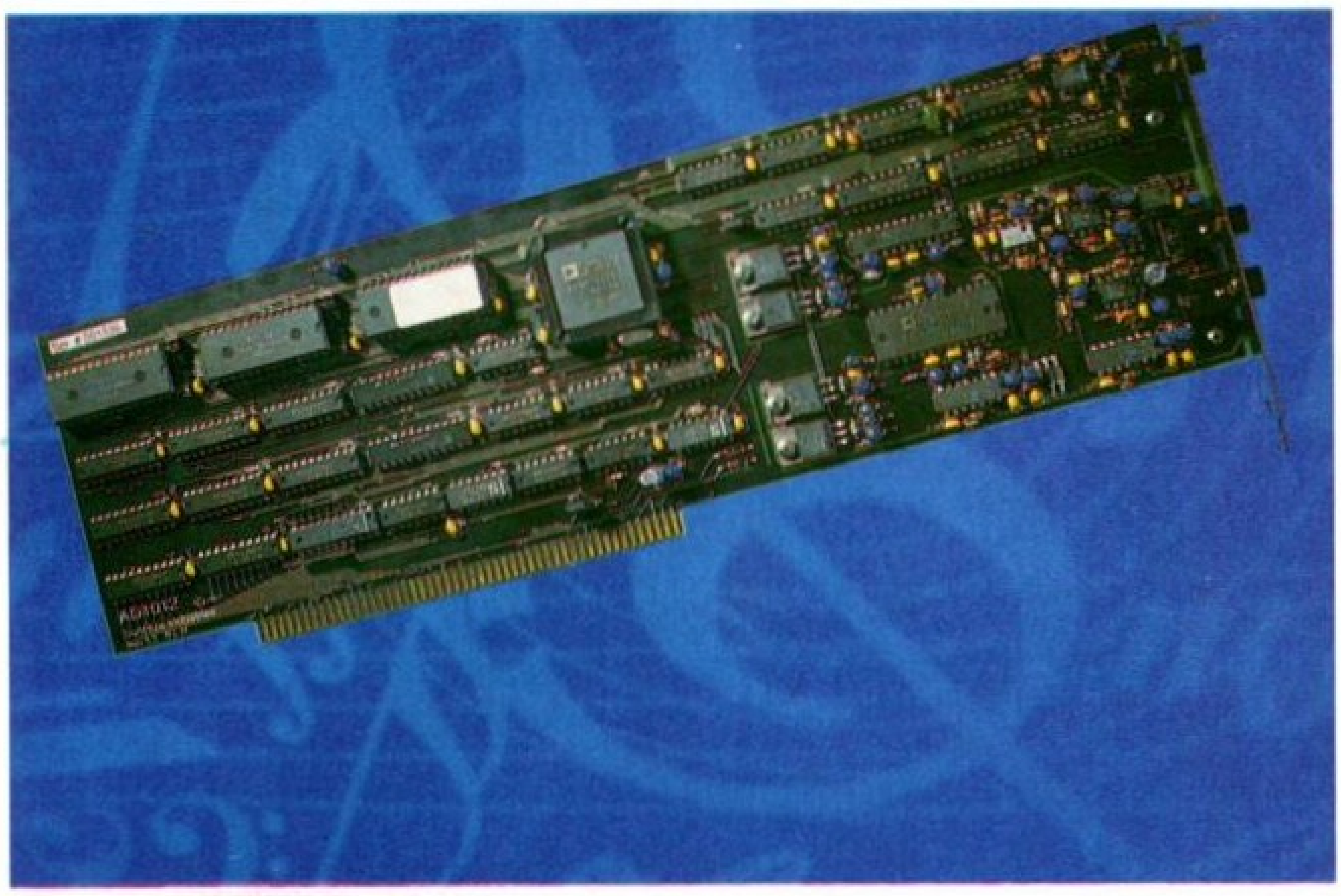
VIDEON
£99 HB MARKETING 0753 686000
Another system that works from a colour input signal and can do grabs in one pass, but doesn't do real time. This is old and creaky now, and the results just aren't good enough.
***Amiga Format* rating 78%**

REAL-TIME COLOUR SYSTEMS

COLOURPIC
£399 JCL 0892 75791
Real-time colour frame-grabbing system (which means it grabs at 1/25th of a second or quicker, so it can grab images from a running videotape). Gives decent results, saves 16-bit images, and has just been upgraded so a new version should be reviewed here soon.
***Amiga Format* rating 82%**

SUPERPIC
£499 JCL 0892 75791
Same as Colourpic but with genlock also included.
***Amiga Format* rating 82%**

FRAMEGRABBER 256
£599 PP&S VIA MARCAM 0604 790466
Easily the most expensive digitiser currently on the market, but also the best. It works in full real time, has plenty of clever features and adjustment options, and very easy to set up and use. But it costs so darned much.
***Amiga Format* rating 82%**



Although direct-to-disk digital recording systems have been around for a while in film and recording studios, the Studio 16 package is a first for the Amiga. But is it any good? **Andy Nuttall** investigates.

Direct-to-disk technology comes to you in the form of the AD1012, a plug in Zorro II card for your A1500 or above.

AD 1012/Studio 16

Direct-to-disk Recording System ■ SunRize Industries ■ £468

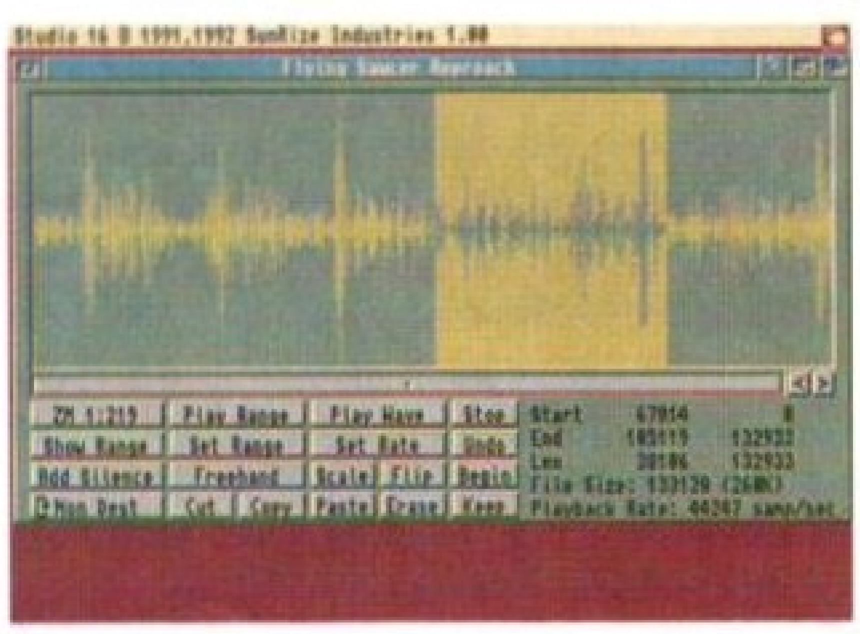
THE PROBLEM WITH traditional methods of sampling is that they are extremely hungry in terms of memory. Sampling systems generally require large amounts of RAM to store sounds, hence it is not possible to record anything longer than a couple of minutes without sacrificing quality.

The advent of low-cost, large-capacity hard disk drives has provided the answer to this problem. Professional audio equipment manufacturers have developed systems which can sample lengthy sounds and music and store the data directly on to hard disk. It is, of course, already possible to record digitally using Digital Audio Tape (DAT), but a direct-to-disk system has many advantages over this, including very fast access time and the ability to manipulate stored data quickly and easily. This makes it ideal for use in many industries such as television and film, where sound effects, music and dialogue could be stored on disk and easily synchronised with the pictures.

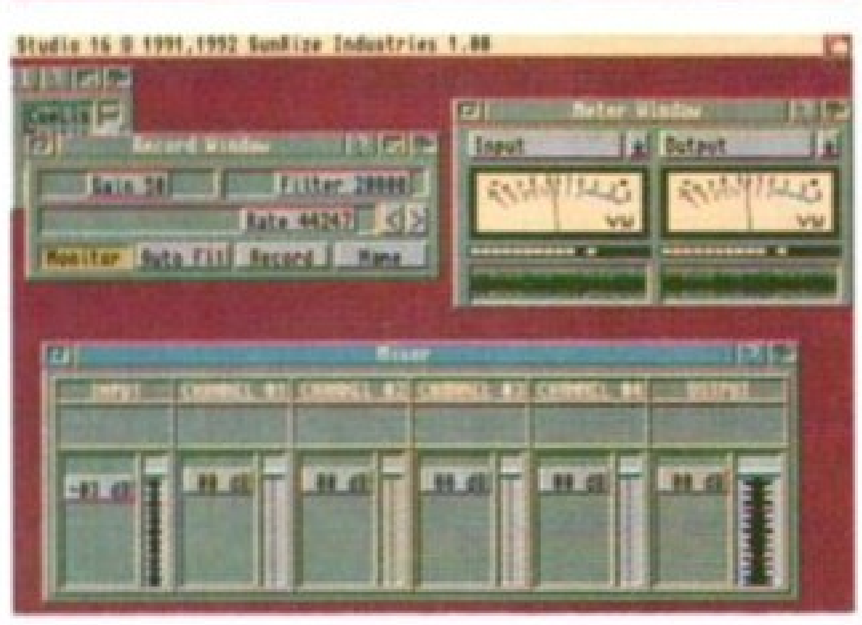
The AD1012/*Studio 16* package is the first of its kind to be released for the Amiga. It comprises a plug-in card called the AD1012 which is used for sampling, and *Studio 16*, a software program which controls the card.

The AD1012 is manufactured to a high standard, and includes some quality features such as 12 bits of sample resolution and a separate digital signal processor (DSP) chip. This handles the sampling and storage on disk, and allows the system to be used as a simple effects unit.

Only one audio track may be recorded at any particular time, and it may then be edited as required. Although there is only actually one output channel, the card allows up to four different sampled sounds to be played simultaneously, creating four 'virtual' channels. A SMPTE time code input is provided allowing the sounds from the AD1012 to be synchronised with external equipment such as a professional video recorder or a multitrack tape recorder.



The editing window operates in a similar way to most ordinary sample editors, and includes some really powerful features.



The cleverly designed display shows each module as a separate window so that you can turn them on or off as you desire.

***STUDIO 16* is available from HB Marketing 0753 686000**

The AD1012's sound quality is really excellent. The clarity of the samples which may be achieved is outstanding, and the real-time effects are as good as most dedicated reverb units.

The *Studio 16* software consists of several modules, each controlling a different aspect of the AD1012, which link together to form a fairly powerful sample editing, monitoring and playback system. Each module may be displayed independently on screen in the form of a window, so you don't have to display anything you're not using. Generally the software is clear, effective and reasonably easy to use, but it does have a couple of faults.

The samples are not compressed before they are stored to disk, and so storage space is eaten up extremely quickly. With a 52 Mb hard disk for example, and a sampling rate of 44.1KHz (similar to a CD player), you can expect around 10 minutes of sampling time – assuming you have nothing else stored on the disk, of course – and so the system would have very little practical use in a recording studio. In addition to this, should the current sample fill up all the available space, the system responds with an error message and sometimes crashes your machine! This is especially bad considering *Studio 16* is such a hard disk intensive program.

Having said all that, if you are a video editor who wants a direct-to-disk recorder which will allow you to synchronise sound effects and short dialogue pieces with your films, then this package could be an excellent buy. And as long as you are careful, you should have enough room on your hard drive.

THINGS THAT GO BOOM!, BANG! AND SNAP! IN THE NIGHT

Once the filming of the latest blockbusting Hollywood movie is complete, and all the film has been edited, then the whole caboodle is taken to a 'dubbing studio'. This is where the sound effects, music and dialogue are added to the pictures. Until a few years ago the sound would first be recorded on to multi-track analogue tape, and then mixed on to the film. A big problem with this method, of course, was synchronising each part of the sound with the required piece of film.

In most dubbing studios nowadays, especially the big Hollywood types, a system known as Synclavier is used to record each bit of sound effect, music and dialogue directly to hard disk. The dubbing mixer will go through the film and mark each place where a piece of audio track is required, while the Synclavier tracks the position of the film using a special code known as SMPTE. After completion the film is played back, and the Synclavier system will track the SMPTE code and play each recorded sound in the stored position. Any mistakes are corrected, and then all of the sound is dubbed on to the film itself.

Synclavier systems are both incredibly powerful and incredibly expensive, costing over £100,000 for a basic set up, but now for under 500 quid you can dub your home movies using your Amiga!

Studio 16

SPEED ●●●
Runs on a standard A1500 or above, but works more efficiently using an accelerator card.

DOCUMENTATION ●●●●
The manual contains all the necessary information, although it's a bit over-technical in places.

ACCESSIBILITY ●●●
Fairly easy to get into and record sounds, but playing them back is a bit more difficult.

FEATURES ●●●
No data compression facility, otherwise packed with top-quality features.

VALUE ●●●
Excellent, top-quality hardware, marginally let down by user-friendly but quirky software.

AMIGA FORMAT Verdict **73%**

RICOH PCL5 LASER PRINTER

Ricoh UK Ltd is part of the worldwide Ricoh Group of companies, originally established in Japan, in 1936. With a turnover of over $5 billion and 37,000 employees, Ricoh has been producing computers and peripherals since 1971 and are the worlds second largest manufacturer of Laser Printer engines. Ricoh have employed their expertise to produce a 'first' in laser printers for the world market, the LP1200 with FLASH ROM.

Fully HP LaserJet III™ compatible, the new LP1200 employs industry proven laser technology. Unlike LED page printers, which use light emitting diodes, the LP1200's laser lightsource, focussed by high quality lenses, is able to produce the most accurate and intense printed images. It has 2Mb of RAM built-in and requires no additional RAM to print a full A4 page of graphics at 300dpi. Its fast, efficient processor and engine, together with a straight paper path design, allows printing at a full 6 pages per minute. Unlike its competitors, this advanced laser engine enables the LP1200 to address a range of print resolutions up to 400dpi. A new driver will soon enable the Ricoh LP1200 to print at 400dpi from Windows 3 (2Mb RAM upgrade required).

Again, unlike the competition, the LP1200 includes a powerful document description language as standard. This language, 'LAYOUT', offers unique opportunities to develop custom-made printing systems. Forms and document templates can be designed and stored electronically in the LP1200's FLASH ROM, alleviating the need for pre-printed forms!

FULLY HP LASERJET III™ COMPATIBLE

400dpi 2Mb RAM 6PPM

FLASH ROM UPGRADABLE!

COMPUTER SHOPPER BEST BUY



DUAL BIN OPTION SHOWN

- **6 PAGES PER MINUTE** – Using a straight paper path
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- **SHARP EDGED PRINTING** – Ricoh FIAL (Fine Image ALgorithm) enhances resolution
- **400dpi RESOLUTION** (Requires 4Mb RAM) – Default resolution - 300dpi. Will address 200, 240 and 400dpi.
- **2Mb RAM AS STANDARD** – For a full A4 page of graphics at 300dpi.
- **UNIQUE FLASH ROM** – For controller upgrade and storage
- **IC CARD SLOT** (PCMCIA/JEIDA Compatible) – For programmable FLASH ROM cards
- **EXPANSION BOARD SLOT** – For improved connectivity to additional systems eg. PC-LAN, FAX etc
- **LAYOUT** – Document Description Language
- **SERIAL + PARALLEL PORTS** – For connection to PC compatibles and other computers
- **1 YEAR ON-SITE WARRANTY** – Next working day response

The Ricoh LP1200 is a genuine laser printer and not an LED printer. Make sure you check out the competition!

See how the Ricoh LP1200 compares to its Laser Printer Competitors

FEATURES	EPSON EPL4100	HP L/JET IIIP	MANNESMAN TALLY 904+	RICOH LP1200
Average Street Price (*expected)	£569	£699	£699*	£699
Official RRP	£945	£1,179	£1,099	£1,195
Maximum resolution in dots per inch	300x300	300x300	300x300	400x400
Windows 3 Driver @ 400 dpi (July)	-	-	-	YES
Print Speed	6ppm	4ppm	4ppm	6ppm
Straight Paper Path	YES	-	-	YES
PCL 5 Printer Command Language	-	YES	YES	YES
HP-GL/2 Vector Graphics included	-	YES	YES	YES
Resolution Improvement/Enhancement	YES	YES	YES	YES
Full A4/300 dpi graphics with standard RAM	-	-	-	YES
Warm Up Time	<45 secs	<60 secs	60 secs	45 secs
First Page of Text Output	<20 secs	<40 secs	34 secs	<15 secs
Document Description Language included	-	-	-	YES
Flash ROM	-	-	-	YES
Upgradable Firmware	-	-	-	YES
IC Card Slot	YES	-	-	YES
Scalable Resident Fonts - in HP LJ III Emulation	-	8	8	8
Resident Bit-Mapped Fonts	11	14	14	14
AGFA Intellifont Scalable Font Technology	-	YES	-	YES
HP LaserJet III Emulation Included	-	YES	YES	YES
EPSON FX Emulation Included	YES	-	YES	YES
IBM ProPrinter Emulation Included	-	-	YES	YES
Standard Tray Capacity	100	70	100	100
Protective cover on standard tray	YES	-	YES	YES
Cost per copy*	1.65p	2.00p	1.71p	1.65p
Min-Max Paper Weight in gsm	60-157	60-105	60-120	60-157
Able to print on OHP Film	YES	YES	YES	YES
Able to print on card (157gsm - Manual Feed)	YES	-	-	YES
Auto Sensing on Parallel and Serial ports	YES	-	-	YES
Standby -Noise Level	<40dB	31.7dB	<35dB	<38dB
Printing -Noise Level	<50dB	43.3dB	<46dB	<48dB

*Cost per copy as quoted by manufacturers - 2/4/92 E & OE All Trademarks are acknowledged

Silica Systems are pleased to introduce the revolutionary, new Ricoh LP1200. It has all of the specifications that you would expect to see in today's most technically advanced laser printers, plus a unique additional feature which places it far ahead of the competition - FLASH ROM. This 'Future Proof' technology protects the investment you make when you buy a Ricoh LP1200, as it enables you to keep up to date with new laser firmware developments. FLASH ROM is an area of memory inside the LP1200 which holds the printer's controller instruction firmware. If new firmware is developed, updated printer command languages etc, can be downloaded into this memory. Other manufacturers would require you to buy a new printer! Fonts, macros, graphics and additional emulations can also be stored in FLASH ROM, or on removable, industry standard FLASH ROM IC cards. The new Ricoh LP1200 is the only laser printer to offer this FLASH ROM facility.

LP1200 WITH SINGLE BIN & 2Mb RAM SILICA PRICE:

£699 +VAT= £821.33 Ref: LAS 5200

MONEY SAVING OPTIONS

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Normal price of 2nd feeder bin £135+VAT
Price if purchased with LP1200 £100+VAT
SAVE £35+VAT

Normal price of extra 2Mb RAM £230+VAT
Price if purchased with LP1200 £150+VAT
SAVE £80+VAT

	SINGLE BIN	DUAL BIN
2Mb RAM	£699 +VAT= £821.33 Ref: LAS 5200	£799 +VAT= £938.83 Ref: LAS 5200 + LAA 5238
4Mb RAM	£849 +VAT= £997.58 Ref: LAS 5200 + LAA 5262	£949 +VAT= £1115.08 Ref: LAS 5200 + LAA 5238 + LAA 5262

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Before you decide when to buy your new laser printer, we suggest you think very carefully about WHERE you buy it. Consider what it will be like a few months after you have made your purchase, when you may require additional peripherals or consumables, or help and advice with your new purchase. And, will the company you buy from contact you with details of new products? At Silica Systems, we ensure that you will have nothing to worry about. We have been established for over 12 years, and, with our unrivalled experience and expertise, we can now claim to meet our customers' requirements with an understanding which is second to none. But don't just take our word for it. Complete and return the coupon now for our latest FREE literature and begin to experience the "Silica Systems Service".

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PLEASE SEND INFORMATION ON THE RICOH LP1200

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Address: ....

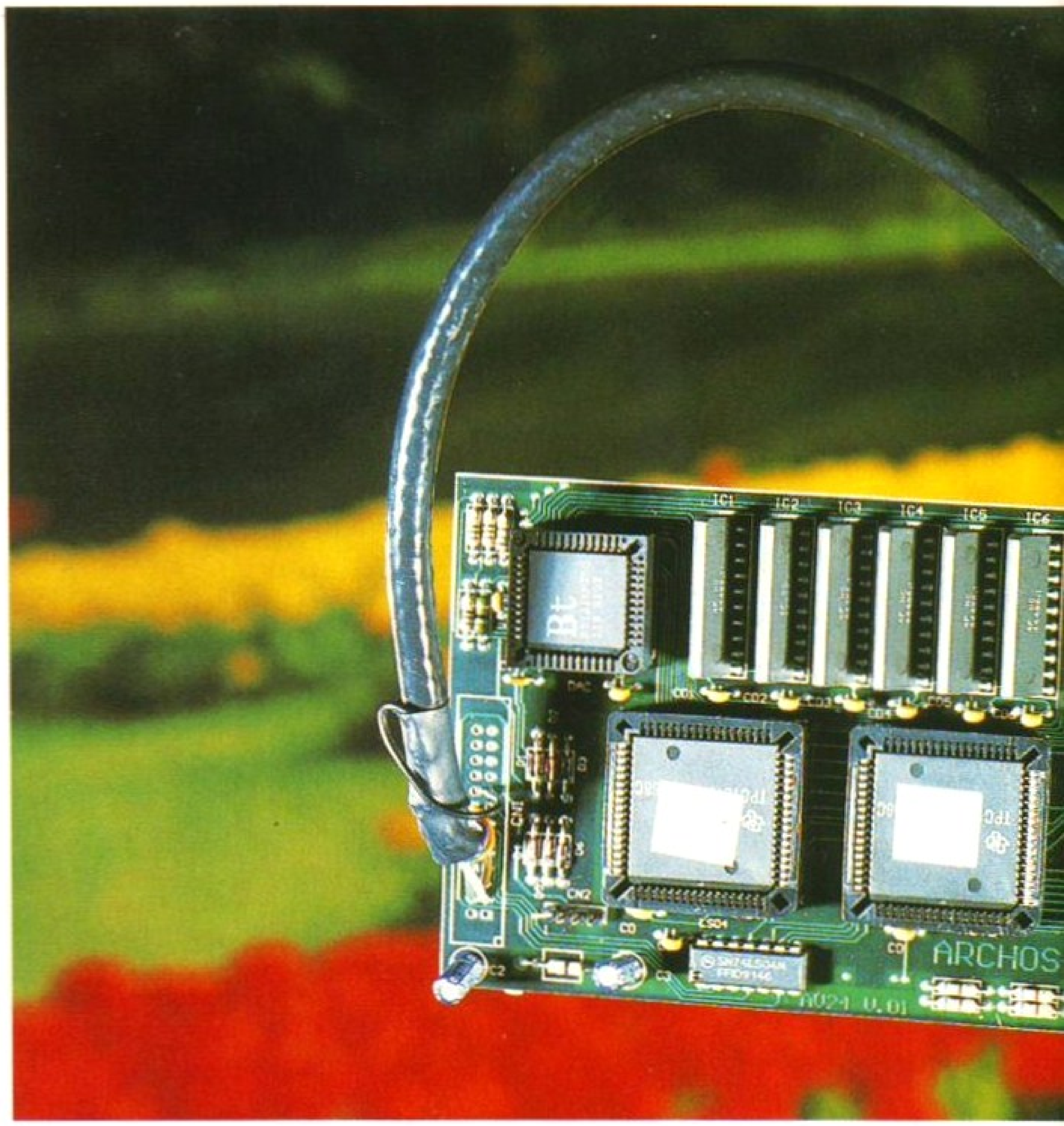
.... Postcode: ....

Tel (Home): .... Tel (Work): ....

Company Name (if applicable): ....

Which computer(s), if any, do you own? 75E

If you're into Amiga graphics, you just have to be keen on getting a 'true colour' card so that you can use 16 million colours. Now, for the first time, you can afford it. **Brian Larkman** tries out the 'true colour' bargain of the year...



AVideo 24

24-bit Display Board ■ £600 ■ ARCHOS

AVideo 24 is available from Checkmate Digital 071-923 0658

IF YOU'RE A graphics enthusiast but you don't own your own airline, you must have found it pretty frustrating looking at all the expensive 24-bit software adorning the pages of ***Amiga Format*** for the last 18 months. 'True Colour', with its 16 million colours and photo-realism, is not only the future of computer graphics but is also pretty fun stuff. But it costs *soo* much...

Fear not though, because your days of jealousy are over. Here's a 12-bit and 24-bit display board which costs only £600 and comes packaged with *TVPaint*, the now famous 24-bit paint program. The bad news is that it needs an '030 accelerator and 4Mb of RAM to run *TVPaint*. Still, even those come pretty cheap these days. It should be possible to give a normal A500 complete True Colour capability for less than £1,500. Wow!

The AVideo hardware is not only tiny – small enough to bring true colour graphics even to an Amiga 500 – it's very cheap too!

Fitting AVideo involves a warranty-eating delve into the bowels of your machine. Graphics chip Denise must be gently removed from her socket and inserted into the tiny AVideo board, then the board is placed into Denise's socket on the motherboard.

Overall, not too difficult a job, unless you have Zap-fingers — and there is only one way to find out. Surface-mounted chips in the A600 mean that te board won't fit in one: Checkmate promise an A600 adaptor, but they will probably need to fit it.

Connected to the board is a standard Amiga Video Out socket attached to an A1500/A3000 Zorro II backplate. If you want to fit AVideo in an A500, you'll have to make a hole in the Amiga's case for the leads and the Zorro backplate gets left just hanging out of the back. The ads don't mention this.

Software installation is easy, unless you are nervous about tampering with the private parts of your hard drive. Just double-click the InstallAV icon and it sprays the necessary bits about all over your system. You gotta have a lotta faith in the writers of these install scripts.

The video output from the AVideo board can be viewed in several ways. First off, your normal Amiga monitor can display the 12 most significant bits of AVideo memory – which means you get a 12-bit (4096-colour) approximation of your 24-bit image.

This can also be combined with the Amiga's foreground image and if your Workbench has a background of Colour0, the AVideo output will show through, much like a genlock. If an actual genlock is connected with a special cable supplied by Archos, live video can also be displayed, showing through the Colour0 areas of the AVideo image. In other words, three levels of signal can be overlaid.

Output from the A3000 VDE port or an A1500 video slot 'flicker fixer' can be used via a MultiSync or VGA monitor. The AVideo signal is 'flicker-fixed' just like any normal Amiga signal would be.

Alternatively, if you prefer simply to connect a standard monitor to the AVideo board's own port you get full 24-bit output, also combined with the Amiga's normal output.

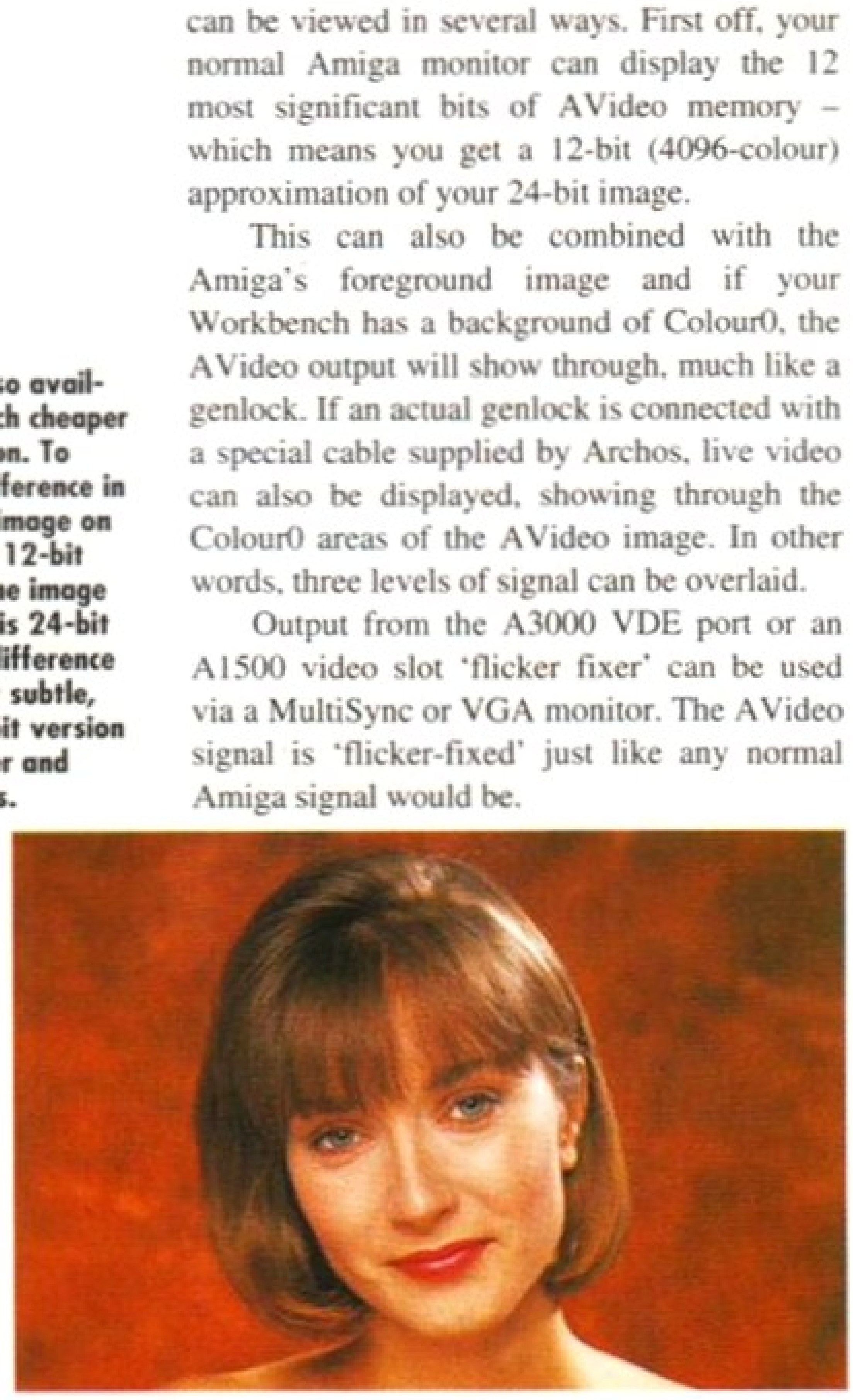
Full double buffering is also provided from either of these sources, the 24-bit buffer being split into two 12-bit buffers, which means you can get fast animation. Speed is also greatly improved on the latest version of AVideo by hardware compression.

If set-up is easy, using the board is another matter. AVideo is, of course, a 'young idea' and needs lots more third-party software to make full use of it. It is fully Arexx-equipped so *Art Department Pro, ImageMaster, VLab* and many other systems can use it. If *Imagine* or *Real3D* had Arexx ports, so could they.

AVideo comes with 'display software' called *Opera* that can be used to control all of the board's facilities including animation. In effect it is an Arexx interpreter, so unless you understand Arexx or have the AVideo manual (not yet translated from the original French), it is fairly difficult to use for more than displaying a picture sequence.

This is becoming a common problem for artists and designers who want to use the Amiga. Packages like *ADPro, ImageMaster* and AVideo assume knowledge of Arexx that many of the most likely users — artists and designers — are unwilling to gain. The growth of Arexx support provides great opportunities to combine features from paint, image processing and 3D programs, but the task is beyond any non-programmer.





AVideo is also available in a much cheaper 12-bit version. To show the difference in quality, the image on the left is in 12-bit colour and the image on the right is 24-bit colour. The difference is extremely subtle, but the 24-bit version has smoother and subtler tones.



What we need is a control program with a straightforward, attractive, graphical interface allowing users to select a range of features from any program that supports Arexx and make them available together. This approach is called Object Oriented Programming, but for Amiga users it is only a dream. Still, it would be an immense step forward if the power of Arexx could be more accessible.

Arexx and AmigaDOS commands provided with AVideo allow sequences of images generated in 3D programs or elsewhere, in anything from 24-bit colour down, to be made into animations that use AVideo's own 12-bit 'AVNM' format.

These can be replayed in overscan high-resolution, full screen, at up to 25 frames per second on AVideo using double buffering and hardware animation. The conversion to AVNM format is quick and easy.

It would be relatively easy for *ImageMaster*, and maybe even *Imagine* or *Real3D*, to direct 24-bit output to AVideo, making full 12-bit animations on the fly as an alternative to HAM. Archos are also working on a more powerful animating version of AVideo that will be external to the Amiga, and will include a 24-bit frame grabber.

Currently the only software that can easily use AVideo24 is *TVPaint* — but then for some of us that will be enough. Check the full review in *Amiga Format* 35, but here we will just review the changes made to accommodate the AVideo hardware.

WHAT'S ON DISPLAY FOR THE AMIGA?

AVideo is just the latest in a series of 24-bit display devices produced for the Amiga by third party developers. They are trying to fill the gap in the Amiga's display capabilities compared to the latest PCs and Macs.

AVideo has several advantages — it is cheap, can display in 12 as well as 24-bits, allows several layers of display under the Workbench, like a genlock, and, most importantly, it can be used to animate sequences of 12-bit images at reasonably high frame rates.

Several other display devices are available with some or all of these capabilities...



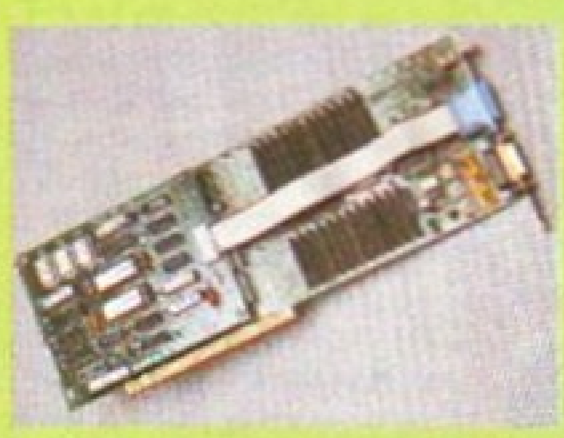
HAM-E *(£299 Black Belt, 90% Issue 27 page 44)* uses a display trick to produce an 18-bit, lo-res display, but it is cheap, and produces small files. It animates with normal animplayers, uses the ordinary Amiga Workbench, and all software behaves normally at normal resolutions, though the hardware excludes the use of a flicker fixer. A rather poor paint package and excellent image processing software come free. At present HAM-E seems to be unavailable — all Black Belt will say is they have signed a non-disclosure agreement.



DCTV *(£299 Digital Creations 90% Issue 31 page 127)* has a rather soft composite output. This is not true 24-bit but gives a true colour effect. It includes digitiser hardware and very good paint package and image processing software. Needs 5Mb to run though. Small files are created. It animates, but you need an accelerator. YV version on its way, with better quality.



IV24 *(around £1600, GVP, not yet reviewed)* is a full 24-bit card including flicker-fixer, 24-bit RGB frame grabber, picture-in-picture display, analogue and RGB genlock, plus a 12-bit double buffer. Bundled software is *Macro Paint, Caligari* and *Scala* but in cut downversions.



ACS Harlequin *(from £1000, Amiga Cantre Scotland, not reviewed)* a full broadcast-quality 24/32-bit card with double buffering and eight-bit alpha channel. Harlequin is perhaps the best-supported card for 24-bit software with an excellent paint package — *TVPaint* — three image processing systems, a YUV frame grabber, broadcast quality genlocks and much more. Recently-developed software allows full 24-bit animation of a 320x256 area of screen.

It is perhaps a little unfair to compare *TVPaint* running on the AVideo board (*TVP-AV*) with the same program run on the ACS Harlequin 24-bit framebuffer, because the latter costs up to four times as much. But we will.

The Harlequin version of *TVPaint* costs £800, so what extra do you get for your money? The short answer is usability.

On the Harlequin, *TVPaint* is supremely smooth and fast-acting, allowing large 24-bit brushes to paint as fast as they would with 32 colours in *Deluxe Paint III*. On the AVideo24 board, *TVPaint* is much more jerky and 'sticky', which means it is simply unacceptable for professional work.

But, that said, most of the features work well enough for domestic and 'enthusiast' applications. In time you get used to the slow response and it becomes less annoying — it is certainly better than the 'Paint' section of *ImageMaster* reviewed in our last issue.

The other main difference between the two is that on the Harlequin all work is carried out on a 24-bit screen. In normal use the AVideo version works on a 12-bit screen — equivalent to HAM in high resolution without the fringing, but also without dithering.

Most of the time the obvious colour 'ramping' bands, that dithering might prevent, are reasonably acceptable, and if you wish to see the full 24-bit image displayed, that only requires a menu selection.

The biggest problem of working in 12 bits, though, is that when you are working in the special modes — Shift, Smear and so on — the effects cannot be seen properly and spontaneity is limited. You have to keep viewing in 24-bits and then using Undo.

Overall, TVPaint for AVideo is acceptable for serious painting and fun for playing with, but I wouldn't want to do any major work with it. Nevertheless, AVideo is a real bargain for Amiga 24-bit graphics.

To put things in perspective, you can get a Mac IIsi with a 24-bit card, VGA monitor and a good 24-bit paint package all for about the same price as a basic Amiga capable of running AVideo. Neverhtless, once AVideo is supported by more packages like *ADPro* and *Real3D* it will be invaluable.

AVideo 24

SPEED ●●●
Animation in 12-bits is amazing — but TVPaint is pretty sticky.

DOCUMENTATION ●
Lots of ReadMe's.

ACCESSIBILITY ●●●
It's easy to set-up, but best features only from Arexx.

FEATURES ●●●●
Fast True Colour animation and 24-bit colour on the WorkBench.

VALUE ●●●●
TVPaint at 25% off — with a 24-bit display board thrown in free.

Amiga Format Verdict 80%

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When we asked **Paul Tyrrell** to look at the Action Replay Mk III, he liked it so much that he didn't want to give it back. But why should an Amiga user find this peripheral so essential? Now that's one question only he can answer…

Datel's Action Replay III simply plugs in on the edge connector of an A500. It then taps into the operating system, allowing you to do all sorts of clever things…

Action Replay III

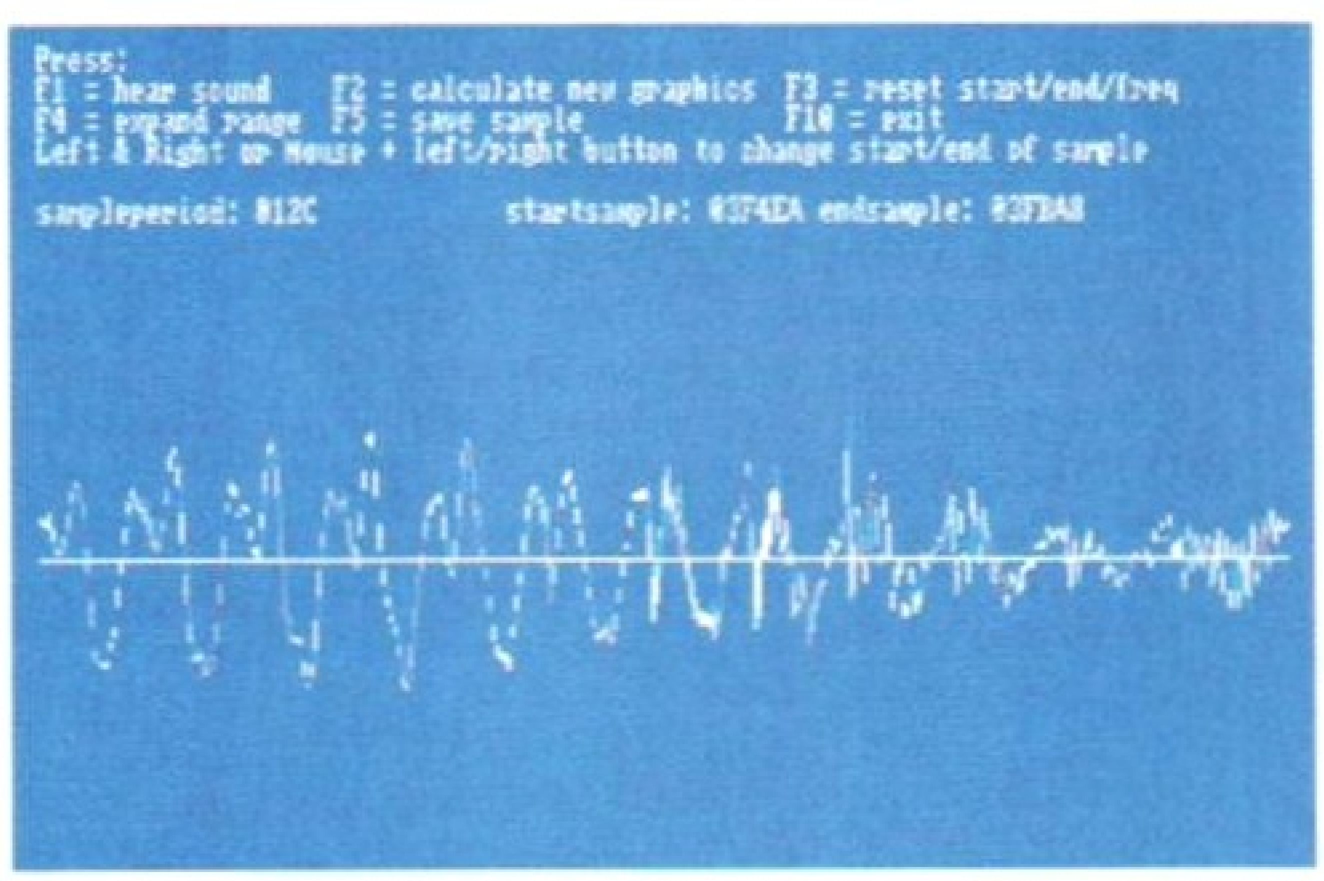
Utility cartridge ■ £59.99 ■ Datel

THOSE OF YOU who have been reading *Amiga Format* since the day it began may remember, way back in issue nine, the release by Datel Electronics of a 'freezer cartridge' called Action Replay. Now in its third form, the Replay Cartridge has undoubtedly become one of the most useful and well-loved peripherals available for the Amiga. But just why is it so incredibly good?

First of all let me explain what a freezer or 'snapshot' cartridge actually does. Primarily, it allows the user to 'freeze' software while it is running and then look at, search through and manipulate the code which goes up to make the program in memory.

IFF files can be extracted from memory and saved onto other disks (both pictures and samples), sprites can be altered and viruses can be removed. A functional CLI becomes available to the user once the 'Freeze' button has been pressed. Clearly the cartridge cannot be specifically categorised because it has so many different applications, although the first Action Replays (produced for the C64), were meant to be more of an aid to games players.

The Action Replay Mk III offers all the facilities Amiga users adored from earlier models (for example, the slow motion switch which decelerates the computer's operations is still attached), and a whole lot more. Makers Datel maintain an excellent standard of hardware construction.



Once you've frozen a program that is running you can then examine and even save out the pictures or, as is going on here, the sound samples.

Upon 'freezing' a program with the Replay III, you are presented with a pseudo-CLI called the 'mempeeker'.

This recognises nearly all AmigaDOS commands in addition to the system's own exclusive options. Despite requiring (for the most part) single word commands to operate each facility, it works at a cracking pace once you know what you're doing. Option screens accessible by the touch of a button from this system also control the allocation of memory, the drive from which everything boots, a virus-killer and autofire modifier - plus many other preferences which take effect next time the machine resets.

Facilities likely to be of interest to the average user are going to be the sample/IFF ripping commands and trainer options. However, that CLI is probably the most powerful tool to have available at the touch of a button because it enables DOS access without interrupting programs in memory.

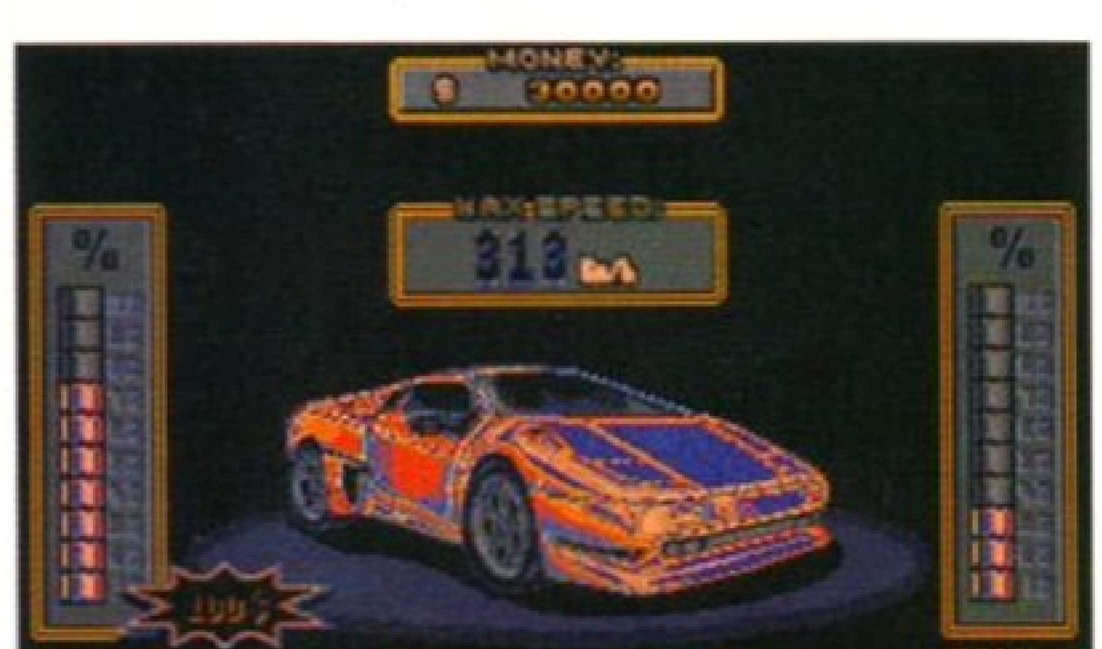
Professional and aspiring coders should also check out the memory and code search facilities, since these are ideal for debugging their own programs and picking up tips from others. There is a simple M68000 assembler within the cartridge which is an incredible asset for those who have the know-how to unlock its potential.

Once you've owned an Action Replay cartridge, you just can't live without one. It has so many different applications that there is something within its ROM for everyone, and I have, of course, only had enough space to describe what is the really just the tip of an iceberg. I could also have mentioned the deep training facility, in-built burst-nibbler, switchable PAL/NTSC screen mode, crunch/decrunch memory save, etc, etc. For the moment, I would hazard a guess that there is no better freezer cartridge available, but maybe there will be a Replay IV out before long.

Action Replay is available from Datel Electronics, Govan Road, Fenton, Stoke-on-Trent ST4 2RS. Tel: 0782 744707



By tapping the button and typing in the right commands, you can look at the screen display as it is stored in memory. If you like the look of it, you can save it as an IFF picture.



Some software, however, does clever things to the screen display between it leaving the Amiga's memory and arriving on your screen. These lose quality when grabbed from memory.

Action Replay III

SPEED ●●●●
Manipulation of the Replay's features is easy with its one word command system.

DOCUMENTATION ●●●
Relatively easy to understand but with too little detail in places. A tutorial disk might be an idea.

ACCESSIBILITY ●●●●●
Just slide the Replay across your desk and it grips on to that edge connector like a limpet. The 'freeze' button isn't hard to find.

FEATURES ●●●●●
How do they fit all of those features into that little box?

VALUE ●●●●●
You get a lot for your money. Well recommended.

AMIGA FORMAT GOLD **90%**

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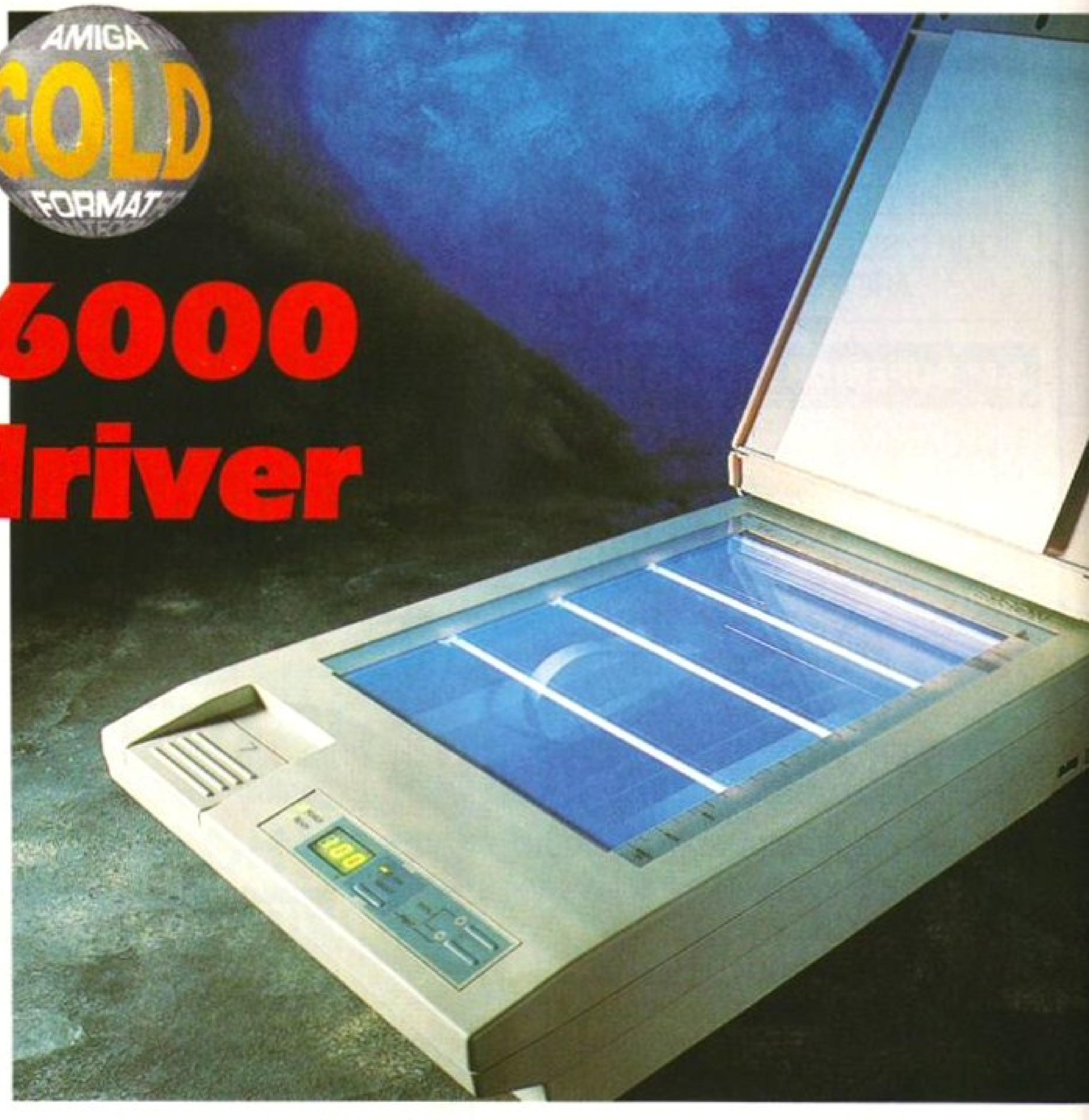
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Amiga-compatible flatbed scanners are not common, but to the DTP user, or Amiga artist they are a boon. **Marcus Dyson** checks out a new package from Epson and ASDG.

AMIGA GOLD FORMAT



Epson GT-6000 and AdPro driver

Flatbed Scanner and Software

£1175 ■ Epson/ASDG

GETTING HIGH-QUALITY colour images into the Amiga is not as easy as one might hope. Sure you can use a digitiser, but even the best digitiser is restrained by the limits of quality you get from a video signal. For high-quality DTP a better image is required, and colour scanners become a necessity. The fact is that there are simply not enough colour scanners accessible to the Amiga user. The problem lies not with the hardware, because much like printers, most computers could theoretically control most scanners. But the driver software has to exist.

Until now the only colour scanners under Amiga control were the excellent, but pricey Sharp JX-100/300/450/600 series. But ASDG, authors of the software that drove those scanners, have released a driver for the cheaper Epson GT-6000 A4 flatbed scanner.

No-one will ever accuse the Epson GT-6000 of being the prettiest piece of Amiga hardware. Its design is functional rather than attractive. It is, however, outrageously good. Anyone considering buying a scanner should give it a look.

The software comes packaged in what is immediately recognisable as *Art Department Pro* clothing, and it is indeed a plug in for that program. If you don't have *AdPro*, however, don't fret – because a stand-alone version is included too. Remember, though, great images are not created with a scanner alone. Image processing software is a necessity once you start doing your own colour scanning. Since *AdPro 2* scored 8% in ***Amiga Format*** 36, it would make the perfect ancillary purchase to this scanner/driver package.

EPSON GT-6000 and ADPRO DRIVER is available from HB Marketing 0753 680000

Getting started is about as simple as it could be: just plug the GT-6000 into the parallel port of your Amiga using the supplied lead. Put the disk into your drive, double-click on the install icon and a friendly arrangement of prompts takes you through the process of mounting the software to your hard drive. A hard drive is absolutely vital when you've just spent a grand on getting true colour images on to your

Ever wanted ready-made 24-bit textures at an affordable price? **Brian Larkman** finds two packages that can be used for creating real-life images in his virtual world.

Real Textures

Texture City series

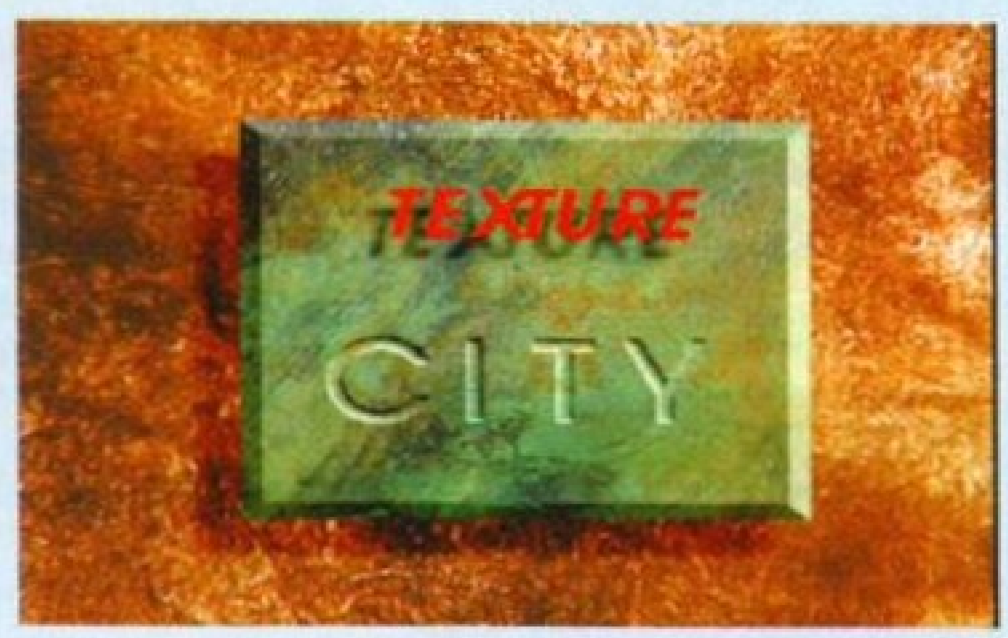
24-bit Textures ■ Price varies ■ Activa
100 images on CD-ROM for £140
60-image 'professional' set £280
40 DCTV or HAM-E images £100
Two 15-image sets for £100 each

Available from: Alternative Image 0533 440041

AMIGA Verdict FORMAT **75%**



A dummy video title screen, produced using textures from the *Alternative 3D Textures* disks, can be compared...



...with a similar screen produced using textures from the *Texture City* disks. There's no obvious difference.

Take a close look at even the slickest man-made objects and you will see the real world is none too smooth. So computer artists need some sort of texture mapping to add real-life imperfection to the perfect, virtual world of computer graphics.

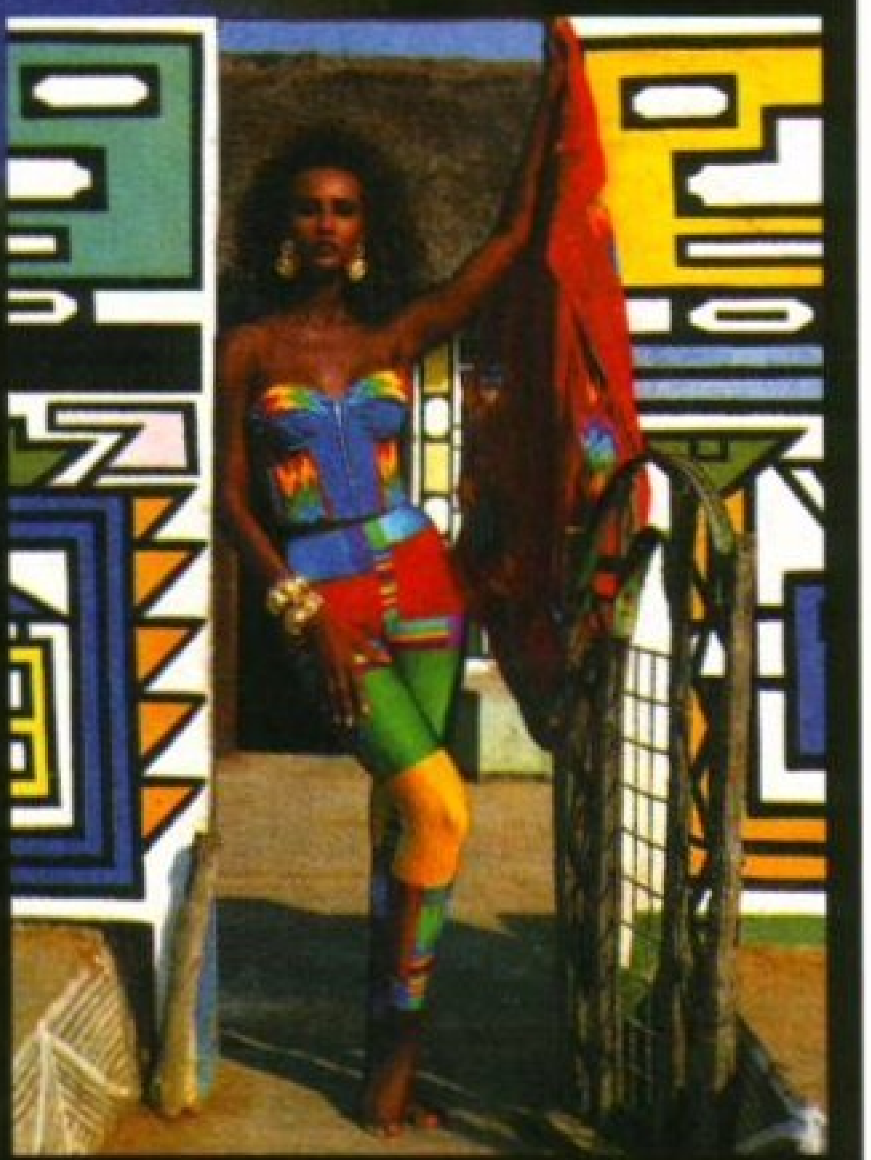
The trouble is, decent texture maps are difficult to acquire. If you have a digitiser you can grab almost any texture, but probably only in blurry low resolution, with uneven lighting. For best results you need 24-bit, high-resolution scans, and not many of us have the resources to produce these.

To the rescue come two sets of 24-bit scanned textures, *Texture City* and *Alternative 3D Textures*. Both are just libraries of scans on disk, but they have chosen slightly different ways of storing the textures. *Alternative 3D Textures* has one texture on each of ten disks, each texture being supplied in four different formats – interaced HAM, eight-colour hi-res (for video titling), hi-res grey scale (for bump mapping), and 400 x 400 24-bit. *Texture City* has gone for larger, 24-bit images but has them JPEG-compressed, which means they have to include a decompressor and viewer program.

Using JPEG means that *Texture City* can fit four 640 x 512 24-bit images on each disk, but each one needs unpacking before it can be used. The decompressor *should* do this but won't, so *Art Department Pro* can be used instead. Supplying only 24-bit files means that other formats have to be produced in an image-processing program – *ADPro* or *ImageMaster*.



The scanner software is a simple-to-control push-button affair, as you would expect from an *Art Department Pro* plug in. The stand-alone version looks identical.



LEFT: The image seen on the preview screen above, after it has been scanned.



BELOW: Another test image. The quality speaks for itself, but remember this was output on a printer costing £35,000.

machine, a floppy would only accommodate a 5 x 5cm scan at 200 dots per inch.

Using either the *AdPro* loader or the stand alone software brings you to the same 'preview screen'. From here you can set the dimension and position of your scan area, adjust the resolution (all the way up to the limit of 600 dpi), or adjust the scan brightness. Once you have entered these parameters, clicking the accept button starts a preview scan – the image being shown on screen as it is scanned. This operation is very quick, and the mono preview image of an excellent quality.

Now's the time to fine tune your crop, and check on the resolution. A running readout of file size is given for 24-bit, 8-bit and 1-bit images, and if the required size exceeds available memory, the file size changes colour to show it is unavailable. One advantage of the stand-alone software is that it scans the image straight to disk, eliminating the need for vast amounts of RAM. A 24-bit A4 image at 200dpi, would be almost 16Mb in size.

Accepting these parameters takes you to the fine scan screen.

The fine scan screen bears an incredible similarity to the preview scan screen, but the parameters on offer are a little different. The settings to be made before your final scan are the scan mode (full colour, grey scale or mono) Brightness, Gamma (a kind of contrast setting) and colour correction. All these options are described at length in the scanner's handbook, and are controlled in an easy-to-use push-button manner. Once the final settings are made, it's time to go.

Pressing the accept button will start your true scan. If you're working in *AdPro* mode you will be limited by the amount of available RAM, and the image will be loaded from the scanner, just as a picture is normally loaded from a disk.

The scan speed is very quick for a scanner of this type and the high quality of the images obtained is shown on these pages.

If you need an A4 flatbed scanner, then this is the one. The image quality matches that of other scanners, but its ease of use, speed and, most notably, price are without match in the Amiga market.

Epson GT-6000

SPEED ●●●●●
Even faster than the Sharp JX-300 scanner we use here in the ***Amiga Format*** offices.

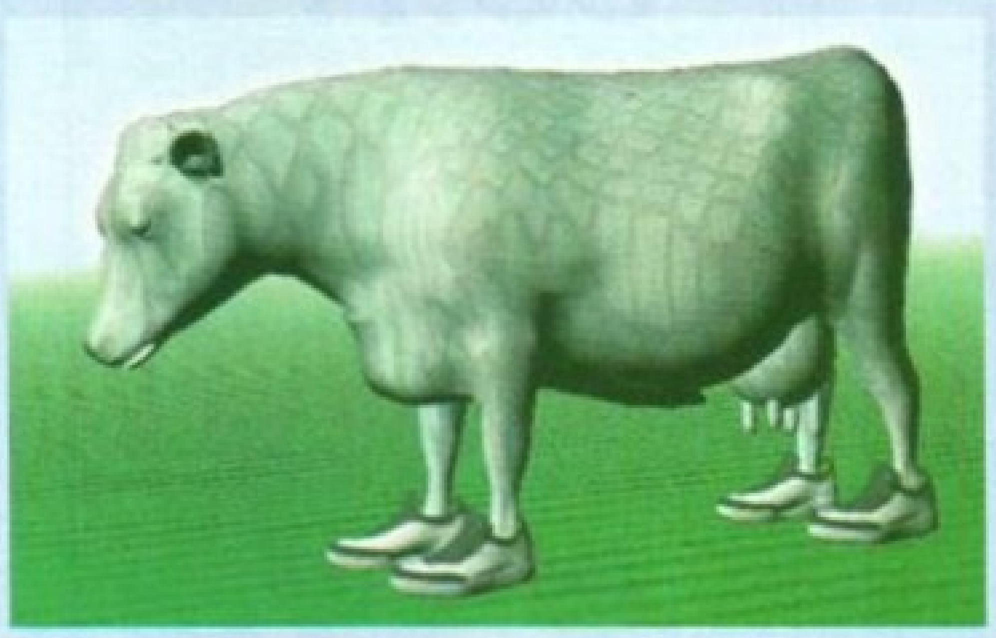
DOCUMENTATION ●●●●●
Comprehensive, thorough and simple-to-understand. Excellent.

ACCESSIBILITY ●●●●●
A beginner to the area of colour scanning could produce a quality image within an hour.

FEATURES ●●●●
A little more colour correction control would be nice, but we're really nit-picking here.

VALUE ●●●●●
The nearest competition costs around a quarter as much again. The word is bargain.

AMIGA GOLD FORMAT **98%**



To illustrate some of the textures available they have been wrapped on to this standard *Imagine* model.

The *Alternative 3D Texture* set consists of 10 disks plus two bonus disks. This is extravagant but the extra formats all sitting there waiting for you make it more convenient.

The 24-bit image size of 400 x 400 is smaller than *Texture City's*, but these textures are more intended for use in 3D programs and this is about the largest size of 24-bit wrap that *Real 3D* or *Imagine* can cope with easily. If you want to use the texture as a backdrop for titling you need to tile it or enlarge it to full screen size.

The bonus disks (sent to anyone who registers their purchase) contain several *Real3D* scenes that are an invaluable tutorial for anyone just starting with wraps. Included are the scenes and wraps for a complete 3D 'earth', a reflective chrome effect, and the bump maps for the famous 'Real Pinball Demo'. As well as the actual scenes there are diagrams showing how to set the 'seam' on each object and how to set up an 'environment' map.

Strangely, considering the almost infinite range of textures offered by our rough old world, both companies have gone for a similar range – clouds, marble, woodgrain, etc. If their market research is correct, we all want the same surfaces in our imagined worlds as in our real ones. But where are the more real and more unusual textures, like peeling paint or tarmac? It would have been nice to see some more mundane textures.

Overall Texture City offers a wider range but it is more expensive. *Alternative 3D Textures* offers 12 of marble, stone, wood, bark, grass and sky that are more affordable and best suited to 3D use, and the range will grow in the future.

Alternative 3D Textures

24-bit Textures ■ £40 ■ Alternative Image

Available from: Alternative Image 0533 440041

AMIGA Verdict FORMAT **75%**

Reverser

Renumbering Utility ■ £10
Alternative Image

From: Alternative Image 0533 440041

If you've ever tried to load a sequence of images produced in *Deluxe Paint* into another program, you are likely to have come against the problem of sequence numbering. *Deluxe Paint* numbers sequences of files by adding .001, .002, and so on to the file name. Unfortunately *Imagine*, for example, expects the files to be numbered with .0001, .0002 etc. Renaming a couple of hundred files with just one extra 0 can take ages.

Reverser takes the sweat out by renumbering files automatically. It can renumber using the required format for any of the 12 main 2D and 3D animating programs, converting any of these to any other. It can reverse sequences, delete, move and — very important this if you have deleted part of a sequence — offset number sequences. Simple and invaluable.

AMIGA Verdict FORMAT **75%**



Hooray! It's that time of year again when rodents everywhere compete for the ultimate title of Meece World! Introducing **Andy Nuttall**, your host for the evening.

Ravishing Rodents

Say "Cheese"! The final fourteen take the stage.

IF YOU'VE JUST bought an Amiga, you may be reading this and thinking to yourself "Why on Earth would I want to buy a new mouse?". Well, in our experience (and I'm sure most regular users will recognise this) the mouse supplied with the computer is not very good. Not only is it generally unreliable, ie the ball has a tendency to slip *just* when you're about to massacre the enemy in your favourite shoot-em-up simulation, but also the buttons are extremely unresponsive and have a tendency to break very quickly.

Because of this problem many manufacturers have gone out of their way to design new controllers which are more responsive and last much longer. Some, though, have thought it best to ignore all the problems of the Commodore mouse and come up with something which is inferior even to that!

In addition to mice, we have also looked at several trackballs which are commonly available. A trackball is basically an upside-down mouse with a larger ball, which is operated directly by hand. It became popular years ago as an alternative method of control to the old-fashioned joysticks and keyboards, although in the past few years it has been overshadowed by its whiskered counterpart. It has a distinct advantage over the mouse in that the unit remains stationary at all times, and so it eats up far less desk space. Even so, the mouse has become more and more popular as people discover its relative ease of use.

We tried and tested fourteen of the most widely available methods of controlling that cursor-type-thing so that you will have some idea of which one to buy when your trusty Commodore cheese-eater finally croaks (or squeaks, as the case may be).

As well as the mice and trackballs we have also looked at two extremely useful devices which allow you to plug your mouse and a joystick into a single port on your Amiga, so you should never have to unplug that mouse again! Right, to the batcave, Robin...

SWITCHEROONEY

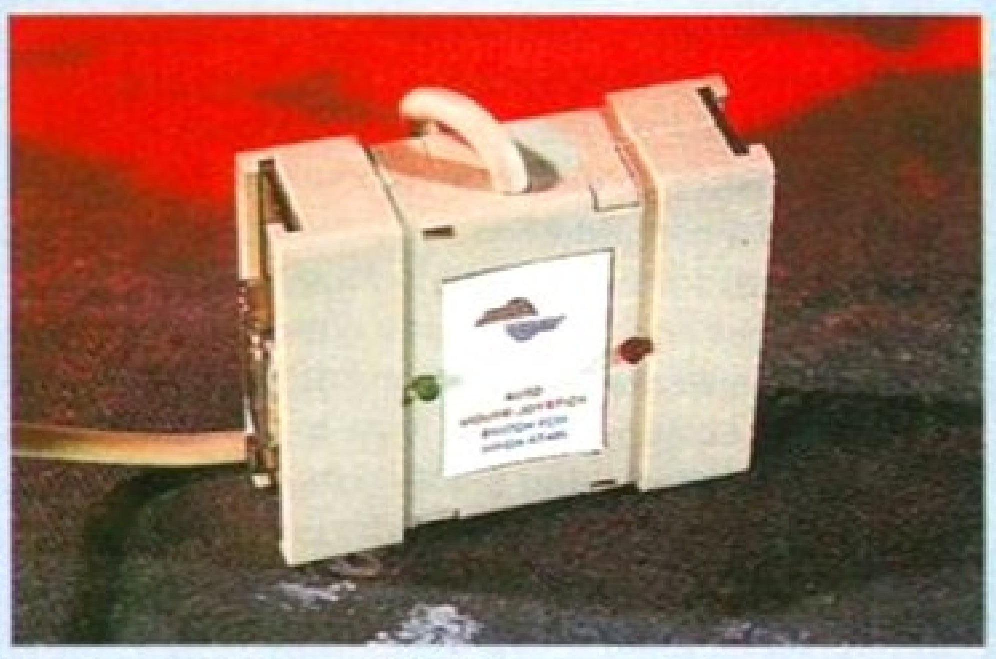
How many times have you had to go rooting around the back of your Amiga to try and swap the plug of your mouse with a joystick? Hundreds? Thousands? Let's face it, it's a pain in the neck. Well, we may have just the thing you're looking for.

These neat little devices allow you to plug both a mouse and a joystick into the right hand port of the Amiga simultaneously, and switch between them at will.

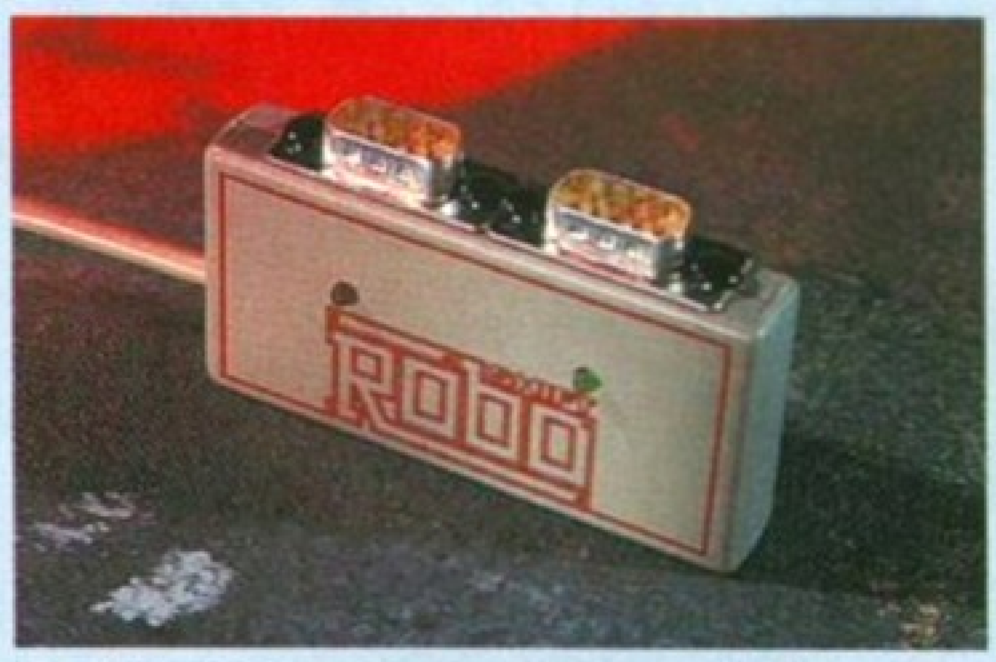
The two gadgets available are very similar both in looks and operation. Each has two 'D'-type (joystick) sockets on the side, and a short cable leading to the computer. LEDs are positioned near each socket to tell you which controller device is operative at any one time.

Switching between the the mouse and the joystick is easy – all you have to do is click a button on one of them and control is automatically changed over to that one. This is an excellent system which thankfully overcomes the problem of having to manually switch between the two.

The first of the two devices available is the Autoswitch from Alfa Data. This is a fairly robust item, made from a similarly coloured plastic to the Amiga itself, which works very effectively when using the joystick for most games and the mouse for Workbench. There is, however, one major drawback. The initial press of a button on either input device not only transfers control to that device, but also registers the click with the computer (which can have disastrous results in some games and art packages). This is a slight oversight on the part of the designers, one which could prove to be extremely annoying in practice.



The Autoswitch from Alfa Data swaps between mouse and joystick as soon as you press a button on either.



The Roboshift from Meedmore does exactly the same job, but an important difference is it hides the first click.

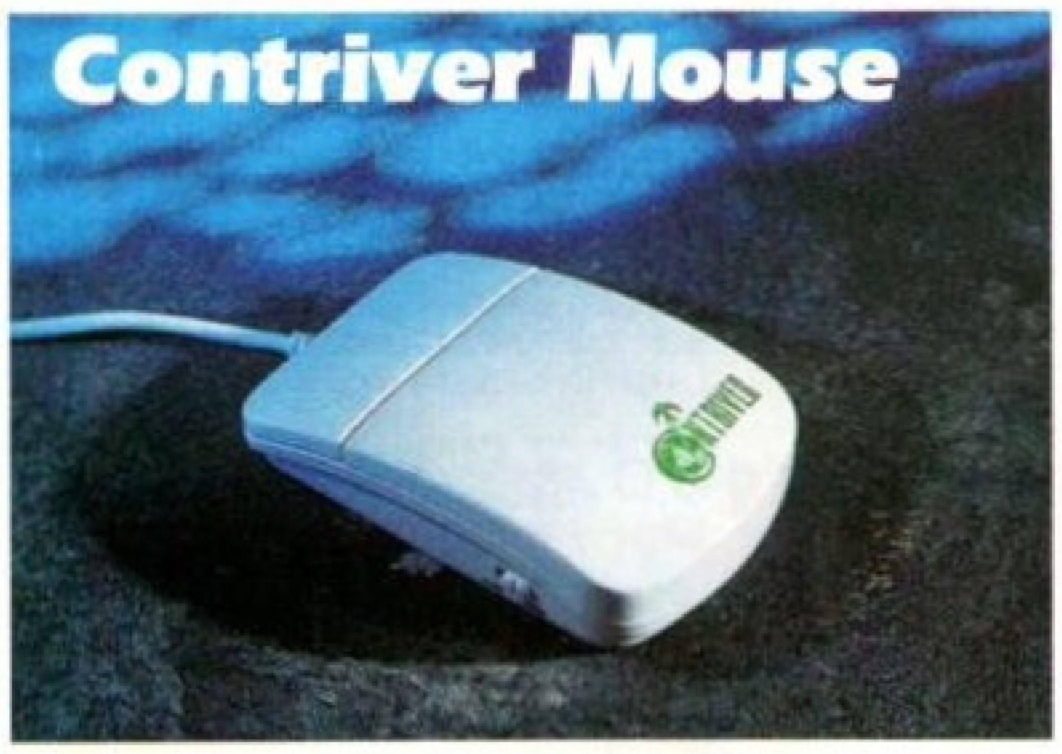
Enter the Roboshift autoswitch from Meedmore. The designers in this case have considered the problem of this initial button clicking, and solved it using a very simple method.

The device has built-in circuitry which masks the first click of either controller from the computer, and so no matter which software package you are using the selection procedure will not interrupt the current program in any way. Full marks to Meedmore for this, then.

The device does not seem as sturdy as the Alfa Data model, but this should not cause any undue problems unless you happen to be dancing on your desk and accidentally stamp on it. Amazingly it's also cheaper, retailing at £15.95 against the Alfa Data's £17.95 price tag.

The verdict, then, has to be with the Roboshift. It works extremely well and costs two quid less than its competitor. What more can you ask for!

Mouse	Operation	Quality	Verdict



Operation

The 290 dpi resolution of the Contriver mouse makes it very responsive for simulation type games, and it also works well in art packages even when working in a high resolution screen mode.

The feel of the device is not unpleasant. It's reasonably heavy compared to some mice, which gives the impression that it's an expensive model, but not so heavy that it's difficult to move around rapidly for games purposes.

Quality

This mouse comes with its own neat little holder which may be fixed to the side of your monitor (or anywhere else you may fancy) but you'll have to supply your own mouse mat to skate it around on.

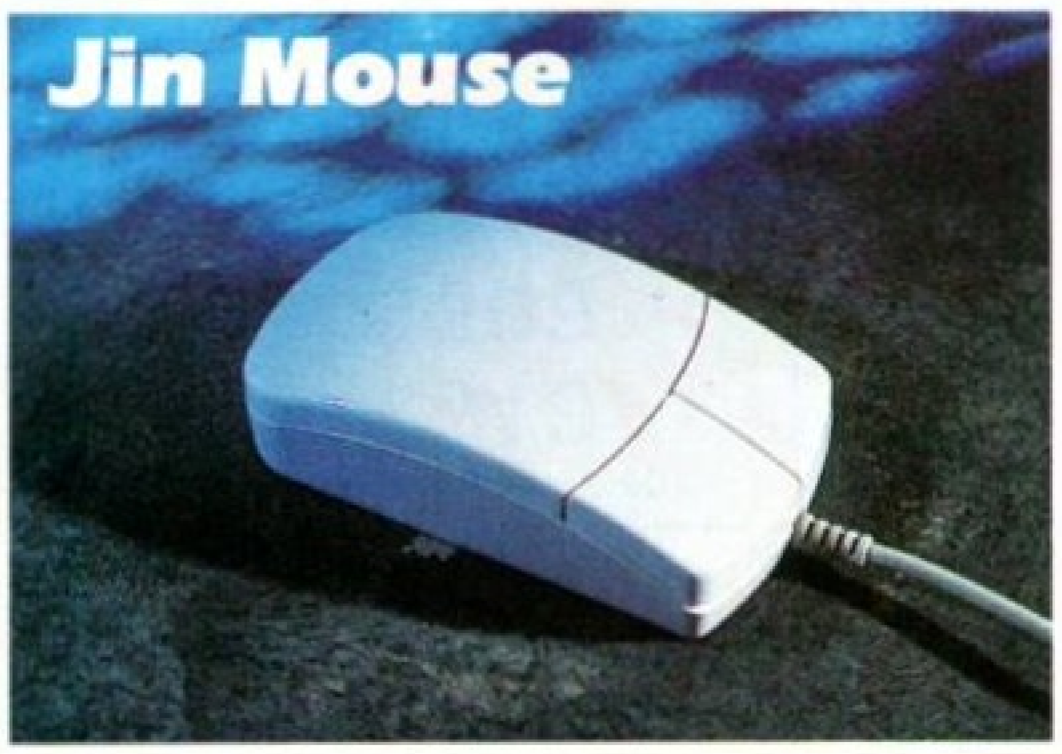
The unit itself looks fairly plain, made from white plastic with a 6ft cable. It's all very good and wholesome, except for the specification on the box which claims it to be "self-cleaning", but nobody here could find anything inside which could back up this statement. Don't let this put you off – it's a good 'un.

Verdict

At £15 this mouse is good value. It looks unremarkable, but then it's not what it looks like it's what it *feels* like that counts, and it feels pretty good.

Its two buttons are microswitched, the action is responsive, and on the whole the unit seems to be fairly robust so it should give you years of trouble-free mousing.

Amiga Format Verdict **72%**



Operation

If you were to imagine what your most ideal mouse style would be, such as one which fits ergonomically into your hand, or one which glides gracefully about the mat, then the chances are you wouldn't come up with this turkey.

The buttons are slightly too far forward for comfortable use, the movement is unresponsive, and the case is made from a material which quickly becomes very sticky and clings to your palm.

Quality

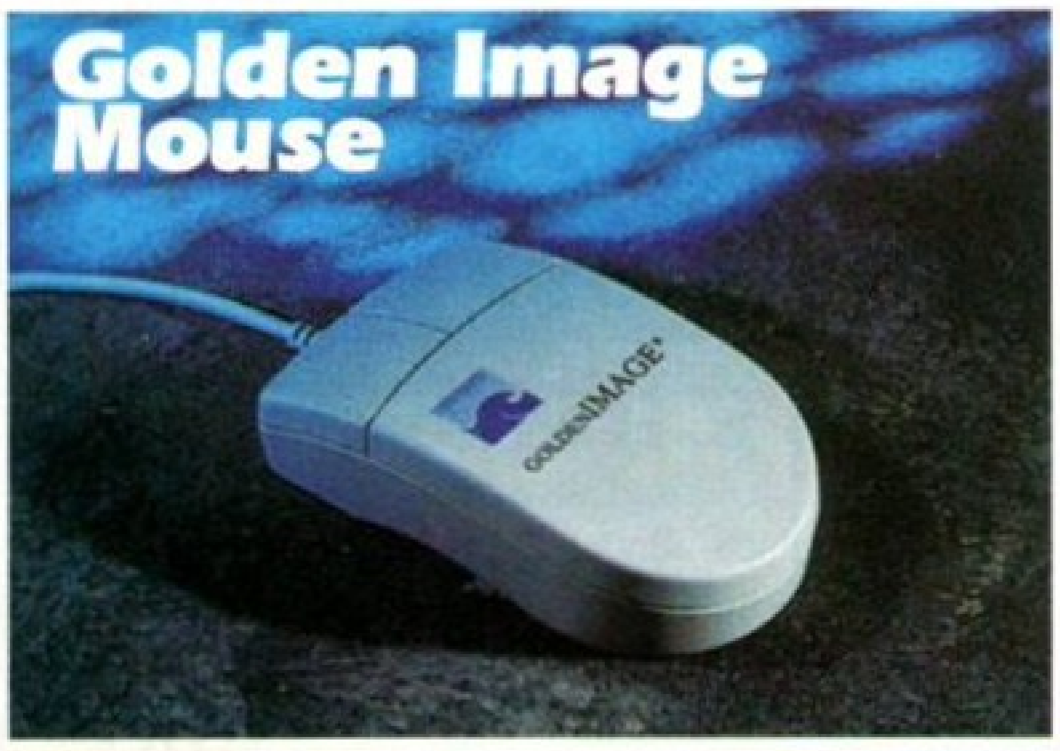
This is a no-gimmicks type mouse, with minimalist packaging and no mouse holder or mat included in the price. This extends further to the unit itself which is made from bright white plastic with no markings whatsoever, not even a manufacturer's logo!

Although the case of the mouse is reasonably strong, the buttons do seem flimsy – as though one strong press could snap the plastic. However, they activate microswitches so if you have a light touch you should be all right.

Verdict

Although this is the cheapest mouse you're likely to find anywhere, I'm afraid I still can't recommend it. It's unpleasant and uncomfortable to use, and nothing special to look at. Under a tenner, yes, but there are far better mice available for just a little more dosh (see Golden Image and Contriver). Still, it's got a 6ft long cord, so you could always hang yourself.

Amiga Format Verdict **30%**



Operation

Without beating around the proverbial, this Golden Image mouse is an absolute gem.

With a resolution of 290 dpi, it handles as well, if not better, than any other mouse I've used – even some at more than twice the price!

It is superb in all aspects of operation. The buttons and the ball are extremely responsive, working well for simulations and all types of detailed applications such as art packages and DTP.

Quality

The shape of this mouse is just about perfect – similar to some others but with subtle differences which make it a joy to use.

This is not all! The unit looks very good, is made from a strong material, and has microswitched buttons which should last a good long time.

The package also contains a mouse mat which doubles as a useful cutting pad. It used to be supplied with a mouse holder, but unfortunately this has been dropped to keep the price down.

Verdict

Some of you may be thinking that one mouse is very similar to another, but how wrong you are. This model stands out from the crowd in terms of quality of build, looks and responsiveness.

Very, very,very good value for money. It's impossible to choose between this and the Mega Mouse for an overall winner, so you must decide yourself.

Amiga Format Gold **90%**



Operation

The Kidz mouse from Logitech is, as its name suggests, aimed at the younger Amiga users.

Well, what do children want from a computer? Educational software, basic art packages and games? This mouse works very well in all of these applications.

Anybody requiring a mouse for a type of application requiring high detail should steer clear, though, as it's not too accurate.

Quality

This has been specifically designed for the smallest hands, so all you adult-types may have difficulty grasping it comfortably.

It's got a great cutesy look about it that will appeal to young and old alike, and it is reasonably well built and pleasant to use. However this does not warrant its high price tag, and I would challenge anyone (including Logitech) to argue otherwise.

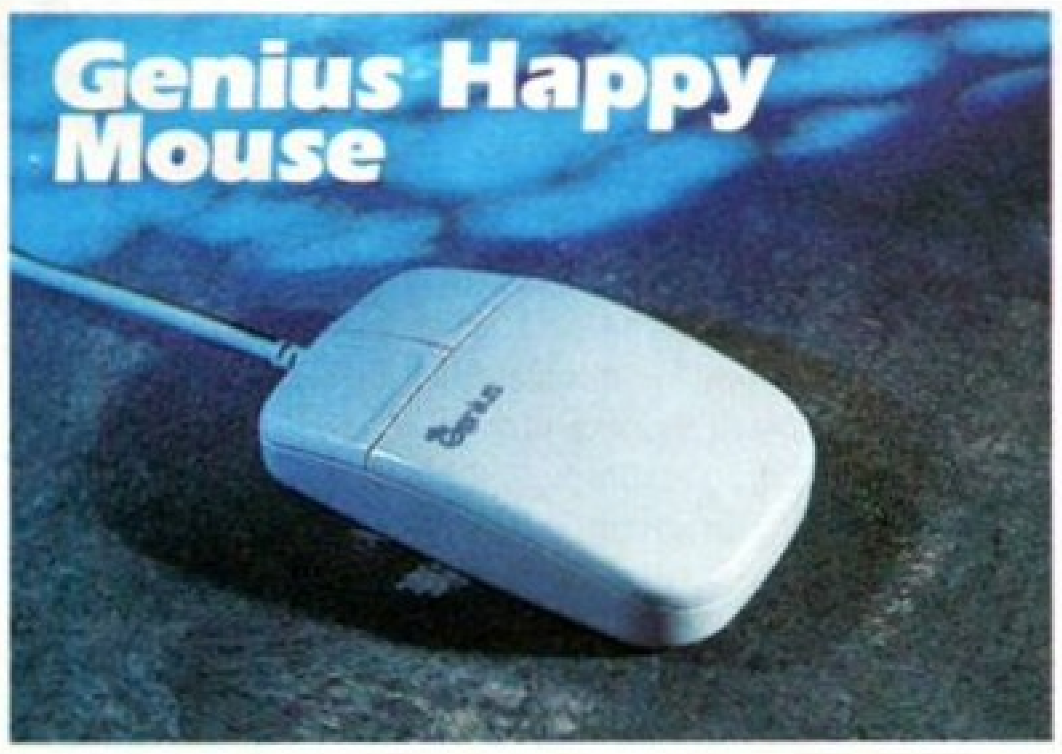
This is another example of a relatively basic product aimed at children sold at an inflated price.

Verdict

Kids! If your Mum has a phobia about small rodents, then this is the one to buy! Don't leave it lying around on the floor, though – even though it's robust, I don't think it could stand the weight of a parent jumping up and down on its head!

No, seriously, it's a competent mouse, very suitable for young children, but supplied *sans* holder or mat and vastly overpriced.

Amiga Format Verdict **77%**



Operation

Well styled and comfortable to hold, the Happy Mouse is, like the Golden Image, a good example of what marketing people and designers can do if they put their minds to it.

As well as being very responsive both button-wise and movement-wise (it has a very high resolution of 350 d.p.i.), it's pretty good for a sound arcade-bashing, and not bad for any detailed arty-type applications such as *DPaint IV* or *Spectracolor*.

Quality

This unit is made from a sturdy plastic with a style which is both pleasing to the eye and comfortable to hold. The buttons are moulded with subtle ridges which make quite a difference to the overall feel of the unit, and they are very responsive, as is the movement of the mouse itself. The complete unit has a quality which belies its price.

Like the Golden Image, the Genius comes with a rubber mouse mat which doubles as a cutting mat on the flat underside, which is an unusual but valuable addition.

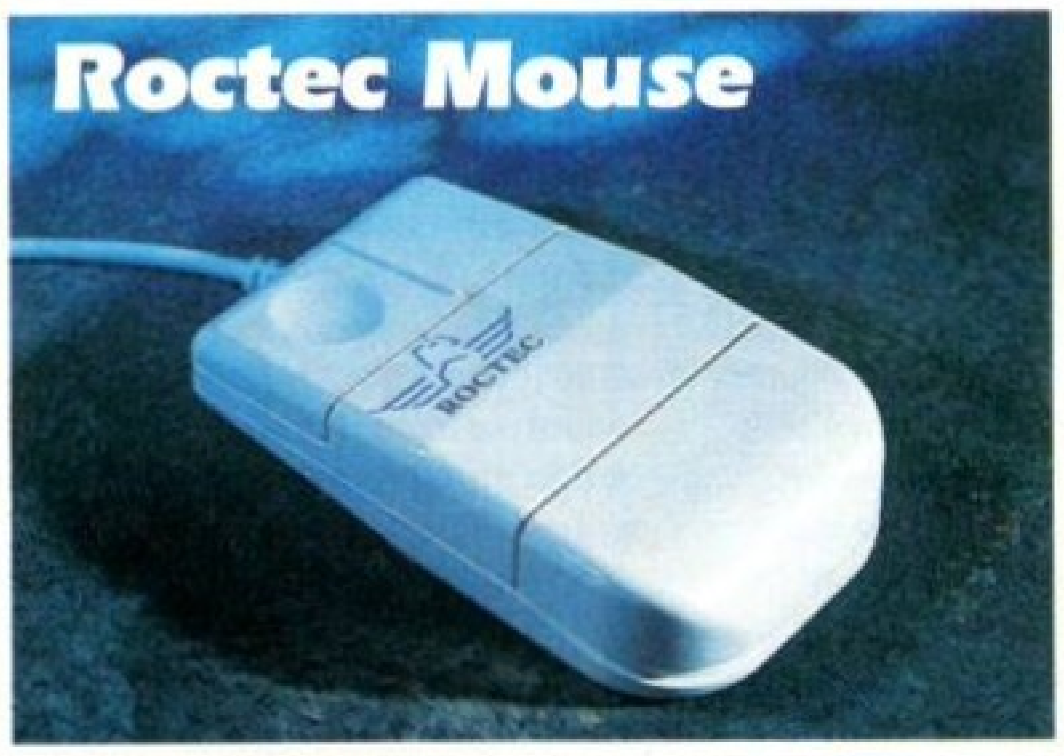
Verdict

At around £15 including a mouse mat, the Genius Happy Mouse gives the Golden Image and Mega Mouse models a run for their money, but doesn't quite make the grade in my opinion.

It has excellent features more commonly found in expensive mice, so try it if you get the chance because it's just possible that you'll love it.

Amiga Format Verdict **82%**

Roctec Mouse



Operation

For simulations and arcade-type games the Roctec mouse handles quite well. It is nice to hold, and comfortable to use. The buttons are microswitched and fairly responsive, but nothing amazingly special.

The fairly low 200 dpi resolution means that high precision work in *DPaint IV* and other art packages is slightly limited, but not terribly bad.

Better than some....

Quality

The unit is fairly strongly built, and not bad looking, although it is a little bright and tends to discolour after a short while.

The design includes a third button positioned at the rear of the mouse. Although Intuition (the Amiga GUI controller) supports a third fire button we don't know of any software that has made use of it so far, so it is effectively redundant (as with all other tri-buttoned devices). It's quite difficult to press in this case however, so it should not get in the way for general use.

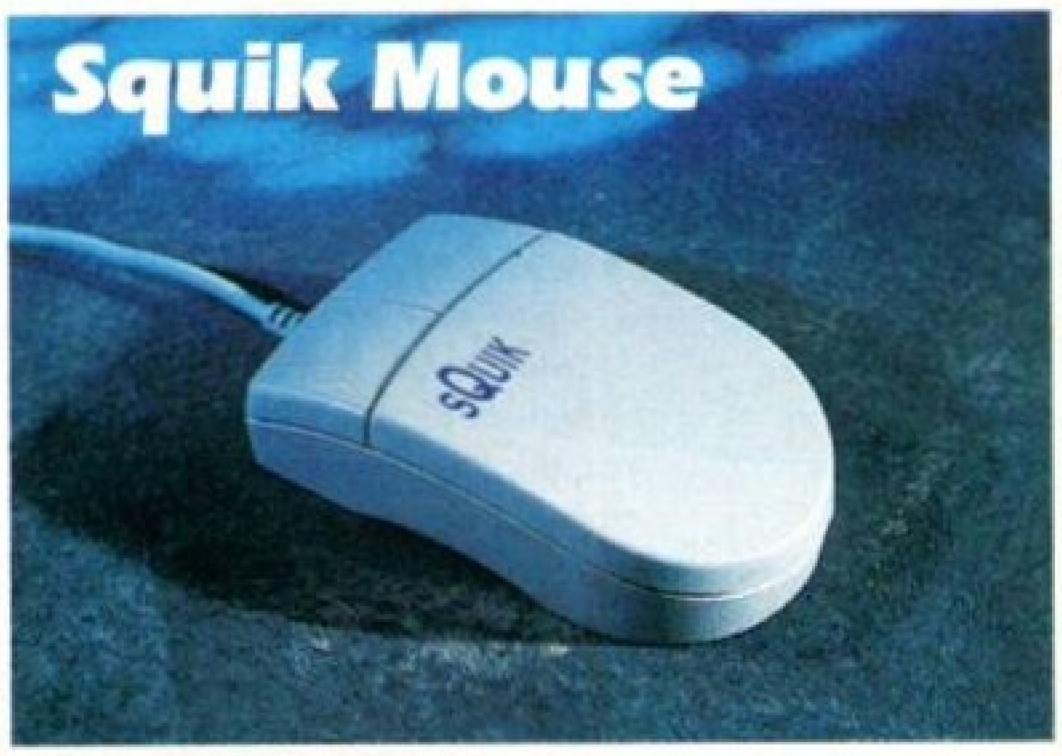
Verdict

At around 17 spondoolicks the Roctec is reasonable value for money, and worth a test drive. It's nice to hold, looks fairly smart and handles most applications fairly comfortably.

It doesn't come with a mat or a mouse holder, though, so you may have a little more shelling out to do if you have already plumped for this choice.

AMIGA FORMAT Verdict **74%**

Squik Mouse



Operation

The Squik mouse is very responsive for simulation and arcade-type games, and it also works well in art or DTP-type packages even when working in a high resolution screen mode.

The device feels pretty good to hold, settling nicely into the palm of your hand. The buttons are within nice easy reach and they are microswitched, making a very professional and an extremely useable unit.

Quality

This mouse is an identical shape to the Golden Image, and made of the same sturdy material, and hence it looks good and feels excellent.

The buttons give a good sounding 'click' when pressed, but seem a little less stout than they should be, especially when compared to its nearest competitors.

There is a mouse holder included in the £17 price, but no mat, so depending on your point of view this may be more suitable than the Golden Image – give it a go if possible.

Verdict

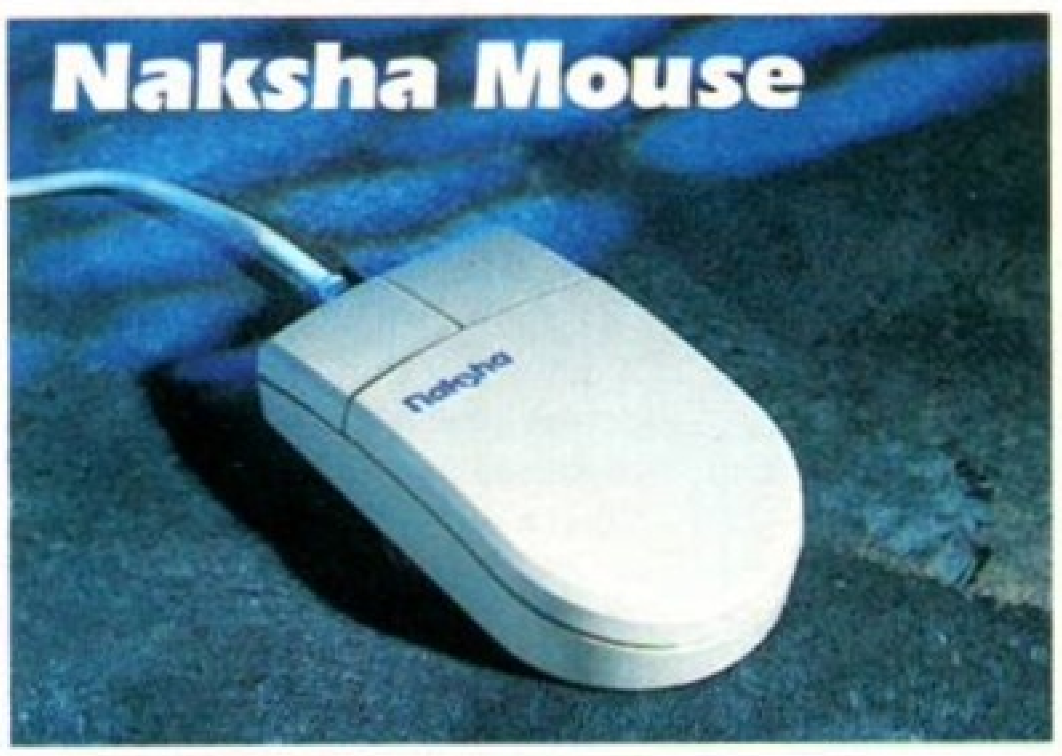
This is easily compared with the Golden Image model, because the casing is obviously made by the same company.

For general applications the movement response is very good, but the lack of strength in the buttons lets it down ever so slightly.

A good value mouse which stands up well on its own and should be tried out if possible.

AMIGA FORMAT Verdict **80%**

Naksha Mouse



Operation

For all types of application, from DTP and art packages to arcade and simulation games, the Naksha mouse performs incredibly well. The resolution is high at 280 d.p.i., which means it is good for highly detailed work too.

It feels very nice to use, being rather heavy which gives it an air of quality when moving it about the mat.

This product has proven itself in the past, and will continue to do so I'm sure.

Quality

The device is extremely well-built, made from a robust beige-coloured material, and designed to fit neatly into the palm of your hand. The buttons are within easy reach and feel very strong. The whole unit gives you the feeling that it's going to last for years to come.

O.K., it's 30 quid, which is a lot more expensive than the GI and the Mega Mouse, but then it is supplied with a mat *and* a mouse holder *and* a free copy of *Operation Stealth,* which may be old but it is still an extremely good adventure game.

Verdict

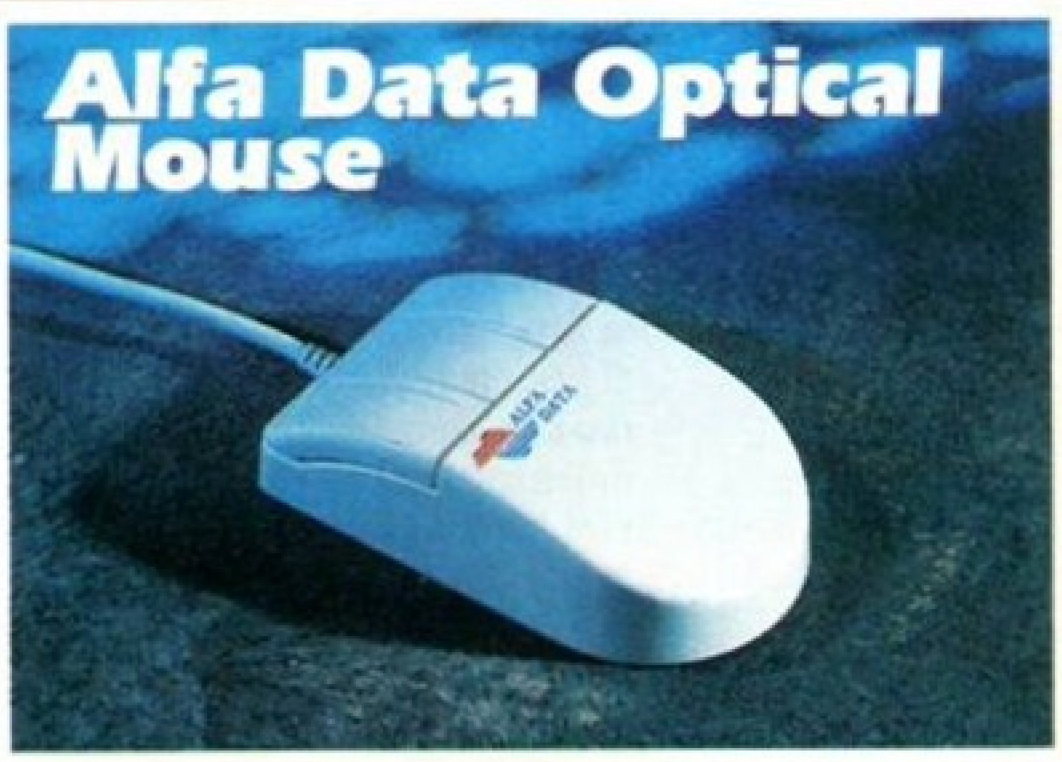
The Naksha has been around for a long time, and one or two can be spotted around the *Amiga Format* office e'en now.

At the time of its release it was acclaimed as the best mouse, and It still holds its own against the competition with its incredible response and robust nature.

At around £30, it is still cheap for such a good mouse package.

AMIGA FORMAT Verdict **89%**

Alfa Data Optical Mouse



Operation

Don't be fooled by the packaging of this mouse, it may have a resolution of 300 d.p.i. but it isn't a patch on any of its mechanical equivalents.

While playing simulations I like to have a lot of space for my frenzied mousing, but this particular model requires its mat in order to work and this is just a tad too small.

Still, it's pretty good for use in *DPaint IV* (even in high resolution mode) and other similar packages.

Quality

The unit looks and feels a bit cheapy plasticky, which isn't a good thing considering its price, but the insides should last a while as there are no moving parts. The buttons are microswitched, but why is there three of them?

Every mouse here has a cord of at least 6ft in length, except this one which is 5ft. Yet which one advertises a 6ft length? Yep, you guessed it... (Nit-picking? Me??)

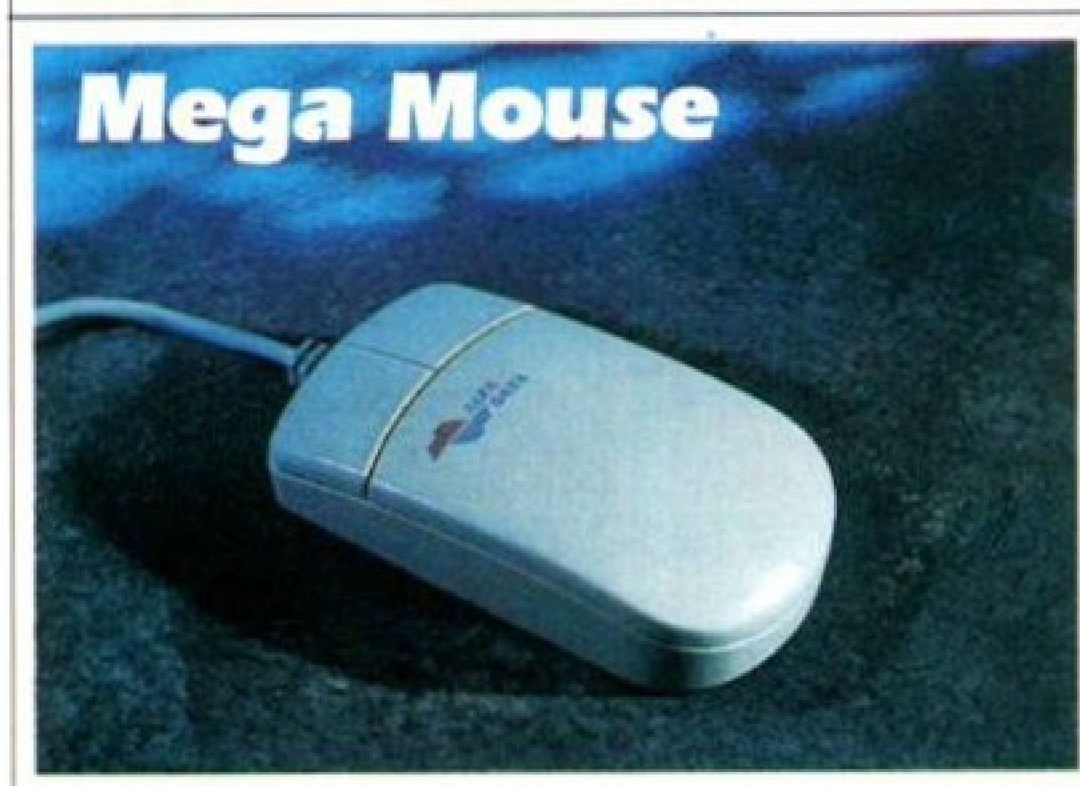
On the plus side, it will work in zero gravity, so anybody working in deep space should buy this.

Verdict

I could never see the attraction of optical mice. Yes, they require less cleaning and no, they have no moving parts, but apart from that what have you got? A cheap looking mouse with an expensive price tag, that doesn't perform as well as some of its mechanical equivalents. It does have a two year guarantee, though, so if you don't lose the mat you should be OK.

AMIGA FORMAT Verdict **64%**

Mega Mouse



Operation

The Mega Mouse conjures up images of some fantastic rodent with all the mod cons such as go-faster stripes. Thankfully the little beast is a smart-looking, low profile mouse that is actually very good in use.

It's well geared, so it doesn't fly from one end of the screen to the other in the space of a millimetre but it's definitely not sluggish.

Overall, it performs very well indeed.

Quality

The mouse has got a nice feel to it, it's not too light, with a decently heavy ball to give you some tactile feedback when in use, and I like a bit of tactile feedback. The buttons are pretty well weighted and not too sensitive so it's not easy to activate them accidentally.

Included in the package is, er... well, not much really, not so much as a mouse mat. Other than that there's nothing to choose between this and the Golden Image.

It comes in typical mouse colours, and is very well made.

Verdict

The megatastic thing about this mouse, however, is the price. At £12.95, you simply can't go wrong. It's such a bargain, I think you should buy one even if your old mouse is fine.

Despite the fact that it doesn't come with its own mat, it performs as well as most of the other mice, but at a low, low price. The man from *Amiga Format,* he say yeah.

AMIGA FORMAT GOLD **90%**

Mouse	Operation	Quality	Verdict



Operation

We described a trackball as an upside-down mouse. OK, they aren't quite the same, but the principle is there.

Generally, trackballs lend themselves admirably to paint and art type applications, and this model is no exception.

It feels quite good to use, being very similar in size, shape and movement to the trackballs found on arcade games such as *World Cup* but has a tendency to slip when moving the ball at speed.

Quality

The unit is of a generally sturdy construction, in a similar way to its substantial elder brother the breeze block, but without any of the aesthetic characteristics.

Although the ball is responsive enough, it does tend to rattle quite a lot which seems to be a standard feature on all expensive trackballs. The buttons are of the pressure variety, not microswitch, so don't expect them to last forever.

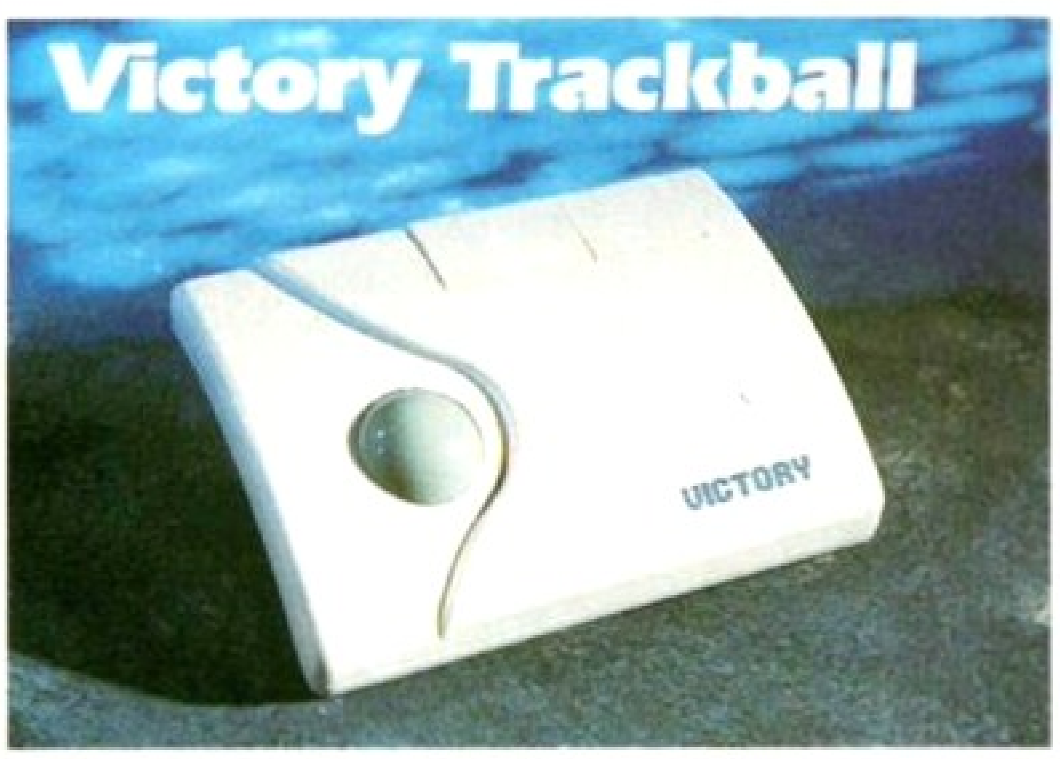
At fivepence less than £50, this is unbelievably overpriced, and not likely to set your trolleys alight.

Verdict

I remember using a trackball which was very similar to this way back in the days of the BBC micro. Since then, it doesn't appear to have been redesigned in any way, and the price is almost the same.

Sorry, Marconi, but the clumsy construction and lack of response from this unit make it an option strictly for the more-money-than-sense brigade.

Amiga Format Verdict **48%**



Operation

The only real gripe I have with the Victory is that both buttons are on the right hand side of the unit, which seems suitable for left-handers only. Apparently the theory is that you operate the unit single-handedly, working the ball with your thumb and the buttons with your fingers. Unless you only possess one hand, however, this seems like a silly idea. After all, what would two-handed people do with the spare one?

Quality

For about £22, the Victory has to be considered a good buy if you like the idea of owning a trackball, but are a bit short on dosh.

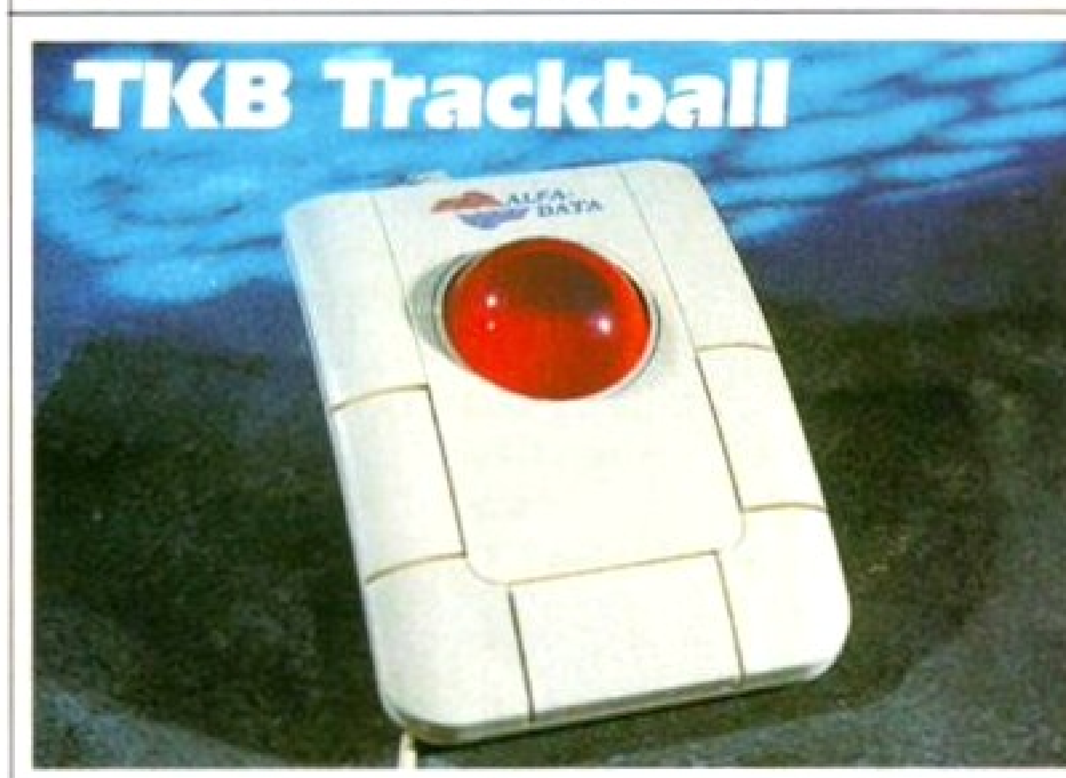
The case is constructed from a very robust material, which is excellent especially for such a low-budget device. The controls are also excellent – a very solid ball which feels excellent (if a little small), and very responsive microswitched control buttons. All in all, this is not just a good budget choice, but a device which rivals the other more expensive options.

Verdict

A nice-looking unit, quite compact and pretty robust. Far from an unpleasant trackball to operate, although some people may consider the ball a little too small for easy use.

The main problem is in the position of the buttons – if you are left-handed, single-handed, or if you think you can live with them anyway, you could do a lot worse.

Amiga Format Verdict **75%**



Operation

Compared with the other trackballs featured here, the TKB is competent, with good response and a nice feel.

However, I do have one slight niggle. The key which locks the left fire button is positioned on the front of the unit, in exactly the place where you rest your wrist when operating the ball. This is useful for DTP, but can be disastrous for arcade games, and could easily have been positioned elsewhere.

Quality

The TKB trackball has a very solid air about it, with a good sturdy case and microswitched fire buttons. At 35 quid for the basic model it is quite expensive, but it is probably worth it if you only want it for DTP or art applications.

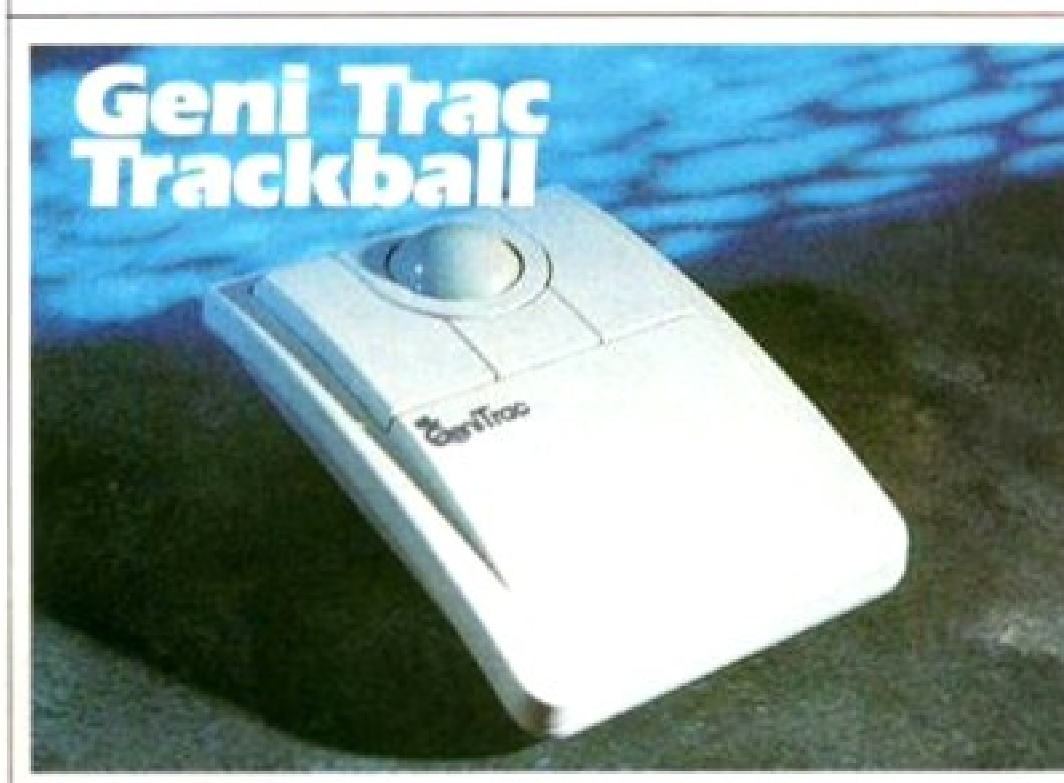
The unit is also available in a sort of 'disco' version with a clear plexi-glass ball and a set of red and green neons underneath which light up when you press a button. What an absolutely ridiculous idea, especially when you consider it sticks an extra fiver on the price.

Verdict

A good all-purpose trackball, if you can get to grips with the silly position of the autofire button.

If you're thinking of shelling out the extra £5 for the flashy version - DON'T! The gimmick value will last until just before you take it out of the shop, so when you actually get it home you can expect to be shouting "Oh, no! What have I bought!" quite a lot.

Amiga Format Verdict **71%**



Operation

The Geni Trac is really the only trackball of this little lot which appears to have been designed with the user in mind. Each of the others have small design faults which spoil the overall feel of the particular unit.

Not so the GT, though. The controls are incredibly responsive, as are the microswitched fire buttons, and the unit performs well for both detailed applications and action games.

Quality

This unit is far and away the best looking of the bunch – the designers have gone to town and created a discreet, stylish and extremely ergonomic trackball.

The casing has a large area on which you can comfortably rest your wrist, and buttons which are nicely positioned for operation using your thumb.

The ball is also well placed, but does tend to rattle a bit when used for arcade games. If rattly balls don't bother you, though, this may be the device for you!

Verdict

At around £50, this unit (along with the RB2) represents the top-of-the-range of trackballs. Unlike the RB2, though, this one almost warrants the high price tag because it looks and feels so damned good!

So, is it the best? Well yes, if you can afford it, but you must consider that you can buy a hell of a lot for 50 quid, so think carefully.

Amiga Format Verdict **82%**

Mice:

Contriver	£15.00	Power Computing	0234 843388
Jin	£9.99	Ladbroke Computing	0772 203166
Golden Image	£14.99	Ladbroke Computing	0772 203166
Logitech Kidz	£32.00	Logi (UK) Ltd	0344 891313
Genius Happy	£14.95	ZCL	0543 414817
Roctec	£16.99	Silica	081 309 5000
Squik	£16.98	Silica	081 309 5000
Naksha	£29.24	Silica	081 309 5000
Alfa Data Optical	£35.95	Golden Image U.K.	081 365 1102
Alfa Data Mega	£12.95	Golden Image U.K.	081 365 1102

Trackballs:

Marconi RB2	£49.95	Silica	081 309 5000
Victory	£22.00	Computer Mates	0753 553 535
TKB	£34.95	Golden Image U.K.	081 365 1102
TKB Crystal	£39.95	Golden Image U.K.	081 365 1102
Geni Trac	£49.95	ZCL	0543 414 817

Please note: As you can see from the box above, Golden Image products are no longer available from Golden Image UK, who now mostly distribute AlfaData products. Golden Image equipment is distributed in this country by Ladbroke Computing (0772 203166) who are also known as Golden Image Distribution GB. Phew!

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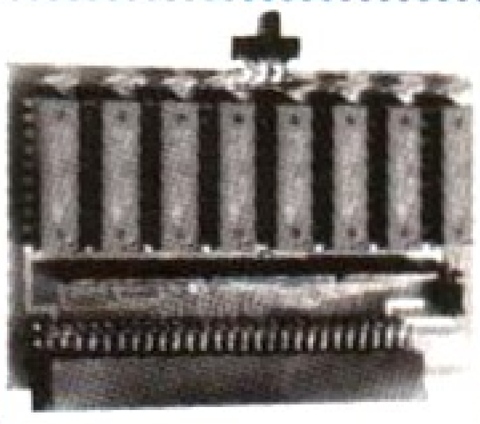
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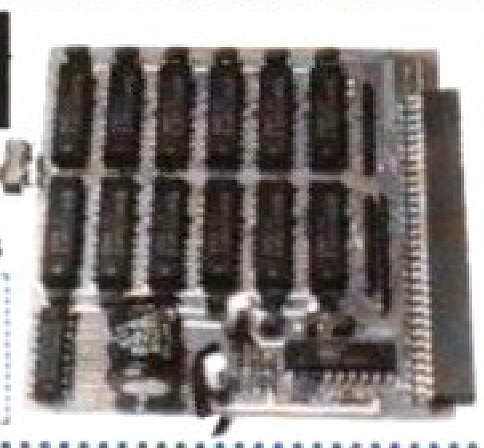
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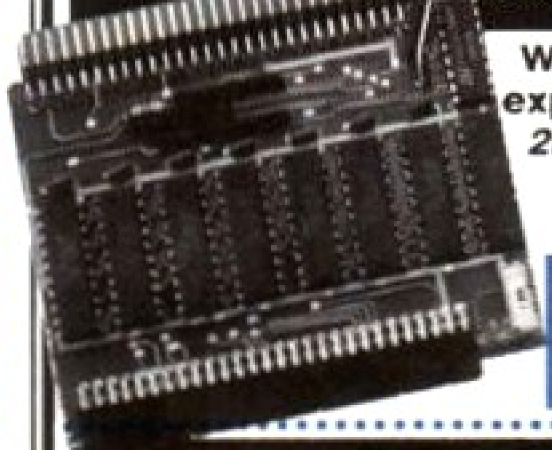
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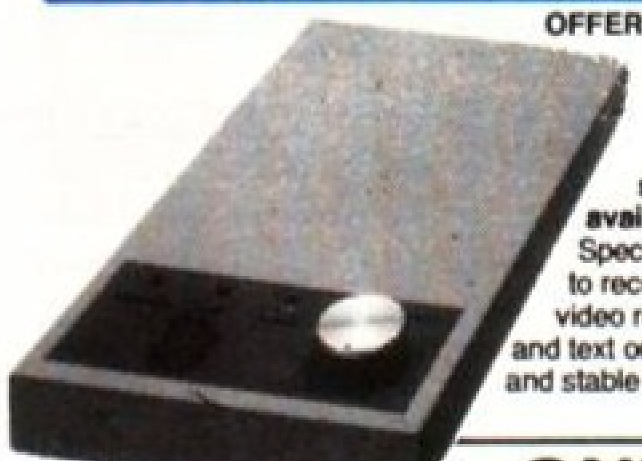
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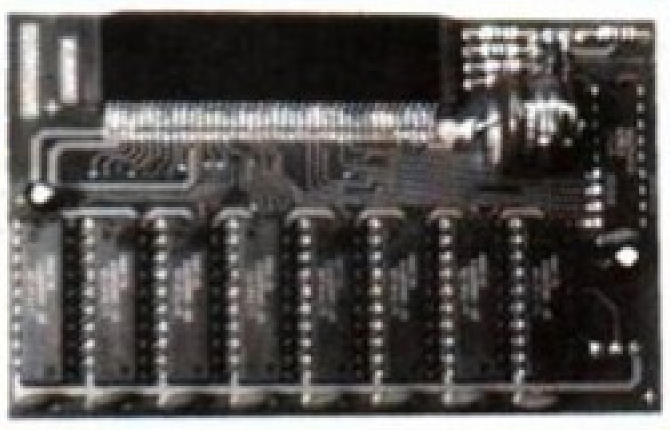
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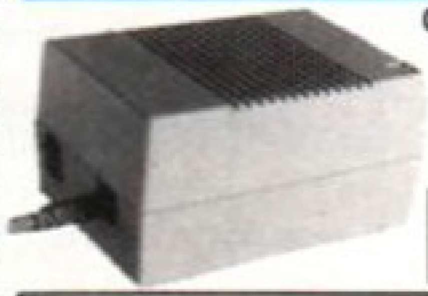
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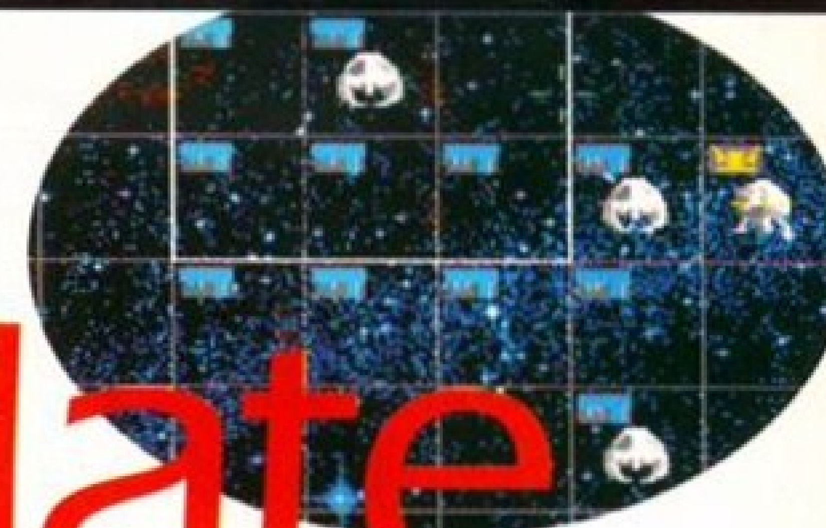
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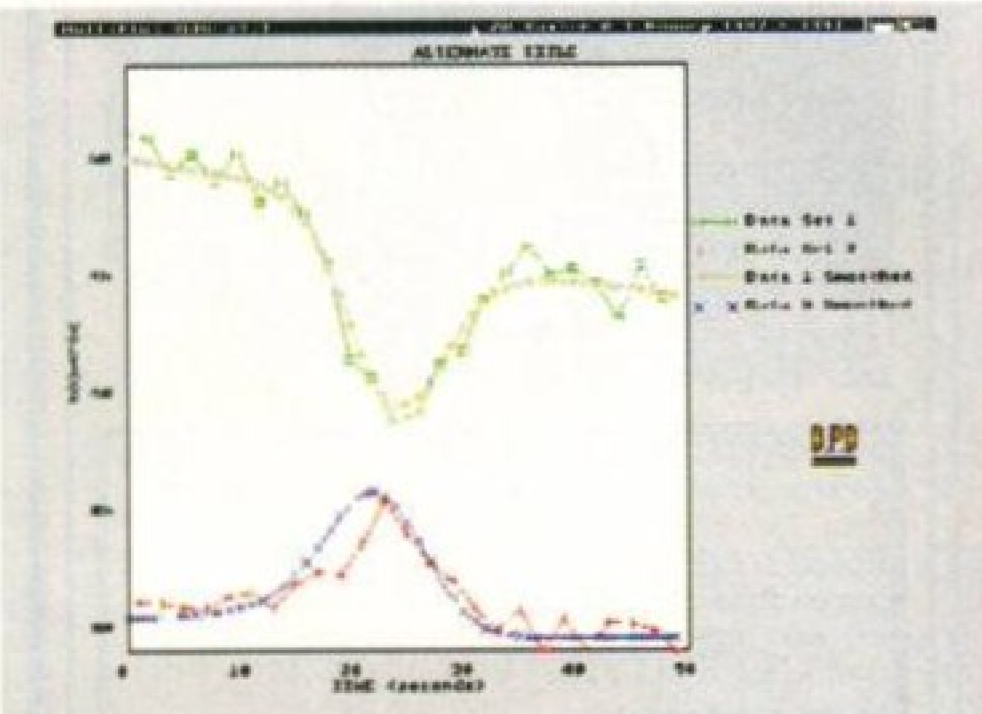
PD Update

Come with us and enter the strange and wonderful world of Public Domain, where quality software usually costs no more than the price of a disk. Your guide on this journey is **Tim Howell**.

MULTIPLOT

TOOL

DELTRAX PD U203A,B



Growth for the third quarter was greater than the same period last... Erm, *Multiplot* makes creating graphs easy.

Of all the titles available in the Public Domain, this is one of the most professionally put-together ones I have seen. And it not only looks good – but its documentation is extremely detailed. So far so good, but what does the program actually do?

Well, *Multiplot* enables you to enter data and see it displayed on-screen in the form of a dotted or line graph plotted using traditional 'x' and 'y' coordinates. You can plot an unlimited number of data points using different colours or point symbols to differentiate between different sets of data.

You can load the data from either a text file, which you can create with any word processor or text editor, or saved spreadsheet data. This file does have to be of a certain file format, but this is all clearly explained in the documentation.

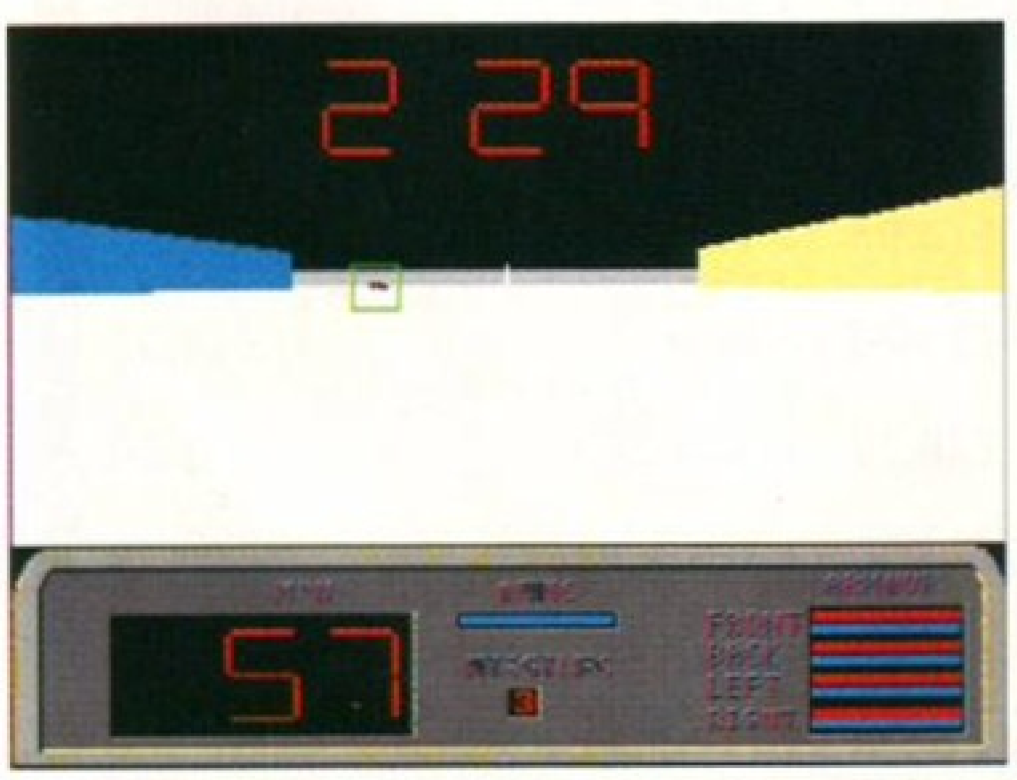
Once you've got the data in the right format for your graph, you can save it in a format which can be used by a number of other programs, including commercial ones such as *IntroCAD* (coincidentally on one of this month's Coverdisks). The graphs can also be output as PostScript files, for use in serious DTP applications, or as IFF files. It is also possible to print graphs directly from the program.

In terms of presentation, *Multiplot* is near-perfect. On-screen the program looks very professional, while the program's documentation file is very extensive. If you have the need for a plotting program, or produce a lot of graphs, then *Multiplot* is capable and flexible enough to handle most tasks.

BATTLECARS 2

GAME

17 BIT SOFTWARE
1984



***Battlecar's* radar has picked up the computer's car in the distance. A press of the space bar will send a missile at it.**

If you thought programs with fast-moving 3D vector graphics are confined to commercial games or PD demos you'd be wrong. *Battlecars 2* is one of the first PD games to use this technique and it uses it to great car-crunching effect.

In the game, you control a futuristic armour-plated car which has to chase and destroy another car around a huge 800-by-800 metre arena within a set time limit. The car you're up against is controlled either by the computer or – only with the help of a null-modem cable – another player.

You have to chase the other car around the huge arena, guided only by your reactions and the help of an arrow which comes up on-screen to point you in the right direction. Once you've caught up with your foe, you have to shoot at it to wear down its armour-plating, preferably before it does the same to you.

You've also got a supply of three radar-controlled missiles which can be used to create more damage more accurately. And if you're playing in two player mode, you deliberately ram into each other's cars.

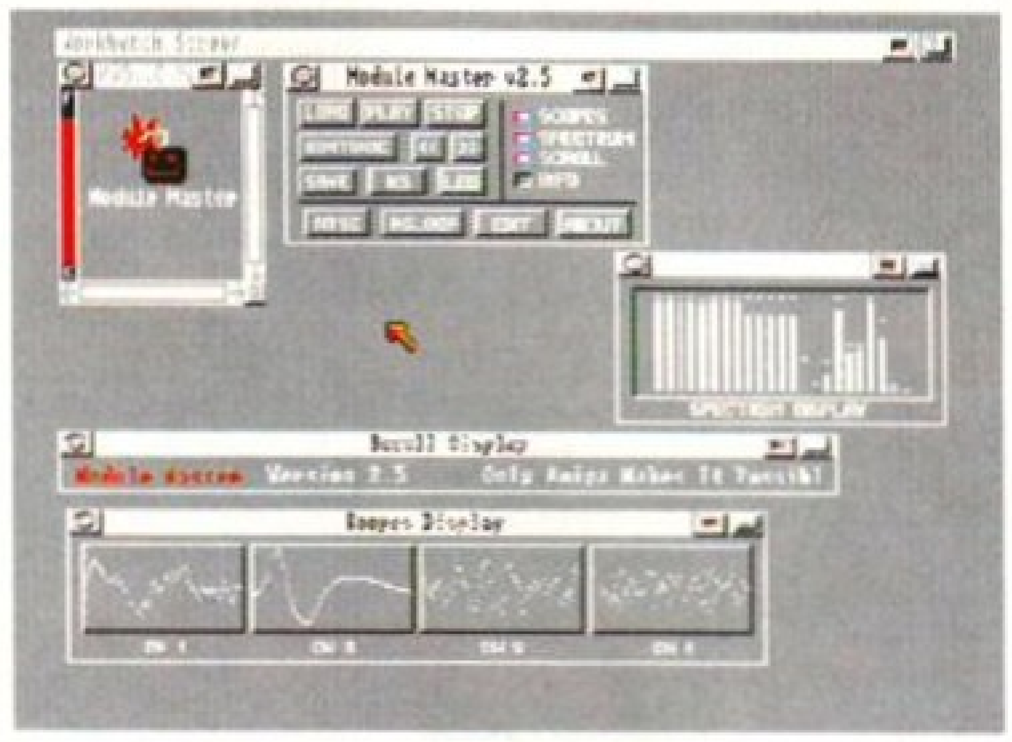
While *Battlecars 2* is initially enjoyable, especially with another person, it can get a bit repetitive. The computer opponent is also too difficult to beat. This gets frustrating, especially as you get a 'Game Over' message at the end of the game regardless of how much you've damaged the computer's car. While it's technically impressive, the gameplay's only good for a two-player game, otherwise it's a bit limited.

MODULE MASTER

TOOL

17 BIT SOFTWARE
1980

Soundtracker utilities are the major tools used to create music on the Amiga. As a result there are dozens of them available in the Public Domain, but to get to hear any of them you usually have to load the program they were created with. Now, though, you could instead use *Module Master* to load and play modules created by the two popular music programs for the Amiga, *Soundtracker* and *Noisetracker*.



When *Module Master* plays sound modules, you can have a spectrum analyser and an oscilloscope shown on-screen.

Not only can you play the modules, though, the program multi-tasks so you can play them while you're, say, working on a word processor or spreadsheeting your company's accounts. This is what multi-tasking was made for!

It is also possible to display a spectrum analyser of the music on-screen as it is being played, while a set of equaliser bars can also be shown. There's also a 'kaleidoscope' option which arranges pretty coloured lines on the screen while the music's playing. Like, hey wow man!

If you've collected a number of sound modules, or you simply want to play them without using the original program, then *Module Master* is really worth looking at. There are even some modules for you to play around with.

Continued on Page 168

JARGON BUSTING – WHAT IS PD?

Software in the Public Domain, or PD software, is marked out by the fact that it can be freely distributed. You are allowed to copy PD software from anyone and to give copies to anyone. It is widely available from small firms called PD libraries and also from bulletin boards that you can connect to if you have a modem.

It's programmed by enthusiasts who want to share their work and it comes in various flavours. The basic kind is 'freeware', which is completely free. Another common kind is 'shareware' – the programmer asks you to send a small fee if you like the program, in return for which he or she will often help you with any problems you may have or send you any updated versions of the program. Another kind of PD is 'licenceware', for which a charge is made – it is akin to very cheap commercial software and uses PD libraries for distribution, but it can be very good value.

If you copy a PD disk, you are under a moral obligation to leave the disk exactly as it is, especially the 'read me' files which explain how the program is used and give the programmer credit for all the hard work.

The price of a PD disk from a library is usually around £2, so it's a great way to buy games, utilities and applications on a limited budget. You can also get some superb demos showing off the Amiga's ability to produce graphics and music.

WAR
17 BIT SOFTWARE
2008

TOOL

War, what is it good for? Well, if this is the *War* you're talking about, then you'll probably find it good for playing.

The Vagans are battling with the Zardons for the supremacy of the universe. You, as commander of the Vagan fleet, have to take over the Zardons' base and destroy their ships in order to win.

War is a combined strategy and action game which can be played by either one or two players. The strategy element plays a major part in the game. The *War* universe that you are trying to take over consists of a number of zones; the more zones you take over, the more resources you have to build more and more new ships and also to improve your weaponry.

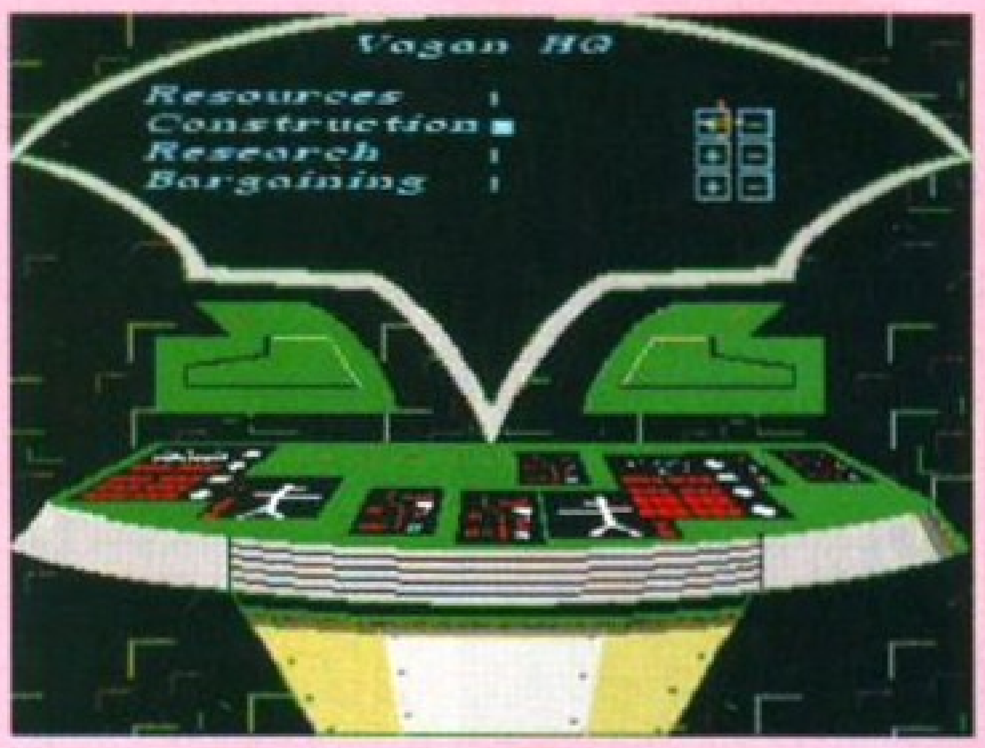
Some of the zones are controlled by Zardon forces, though, so to take control you have to go into battle. There are two forms of battle: one in space in which you have a mothership and four fighter ships up on each side, and another one on a planet's surface which is a one-on-one fight between the two sides.

As you destroy the other side's ships and take over the universe, you can get increasingly powerful, with more ships giving you more chances to gain control. Once you've destroyed all the opposition's ships and taken over its base – you have to fly down a scrolling overhead trench to do so – you win the battle.

War is an interesting mix of strategy and action elements that combine well to make a playable game. There are several different difficulty levels which make the game accessible to all types of players, and it's enjoyable as both a one and two-player game. And all this is accompanied by some atmospheric graphics and sound effects. If you fancy some action which involves a bit of thinking, this is well worth a look.



Here in deep, deep space the two sides move from one part of the universe to the next to claim it as their own.



A key part of the game is to allocate your resources to ensure you can effectively compete with the other side.


When you want to take over the opponent's mothership you are attacked by a series of ships down this trench.

MAGNETIC PAGES
17 BIT SOFTWARE
1981

TOOL


This is one of the pages with *Magnetic Pages*, showing that text and graphics can both be used on a page.

Is the printed word becoming out-moded? It does seem to be the case with the massive growth of computer-orientated publications. And if you're thinking about creating your own computer fanzine, why not really impress fellow Amiga users by producing your own disk-based magazine?

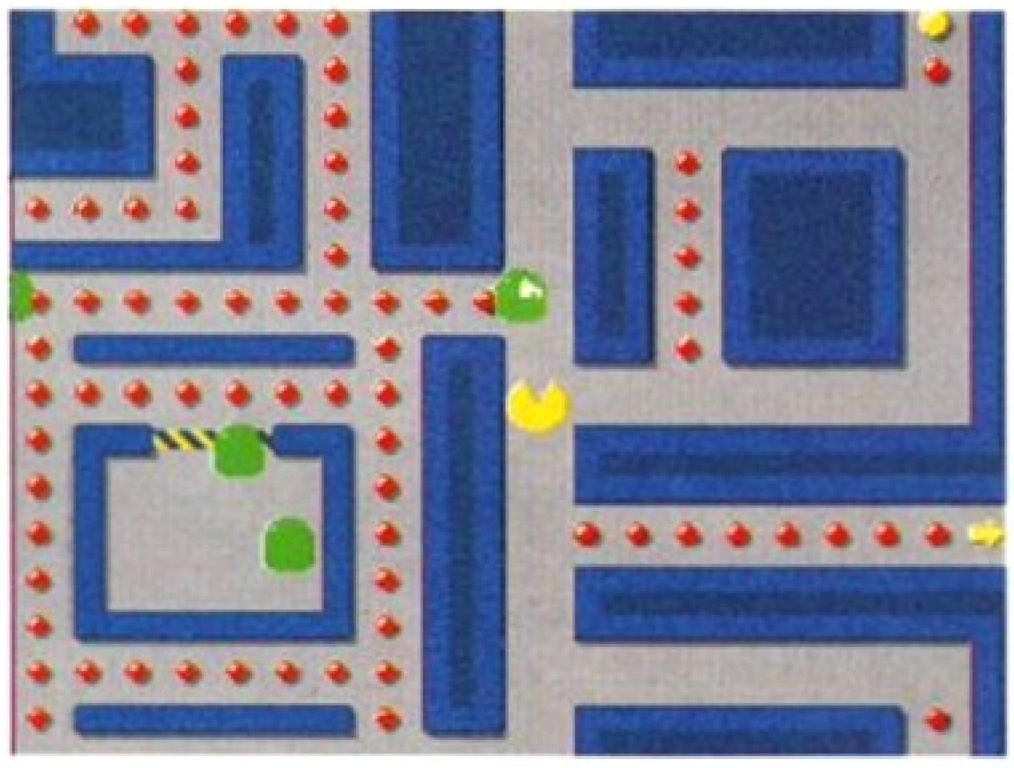
Magnetic Pages enables you to create your own disk magazines. Well, the full version does – this is a cut-down shareware version which doesn't let you save the script files for your disk mag but still lets you create them. *Magnetic Pages* consists of three separate programs which are used together to get the final diskmag. *Editor* enables you to create articles, *Organiser* assembles these articles into the magazine, while *Displayer* displays the completed mag.

The programs are capable of creating some very good results. Text, as well as graphics, can be incorporated on a single page. And while this is happening you can have a digitised sample, *MED* or *Soundtracker* tune playing in the background as well. Once you've created the magazine (and there's a demo one on the disk to show you what the end result can look like), it's easy to switch between pages and articles.

Magnetic Pages gives you the opportunity to create your own disk magazines. While you can create a diskmag using the program, if you want to save it and run it independently you need to register and get the full version. At US$30, or about £18, this doesn't cost too much to do. Budding publishers should take a look at *Magnetic Pages*.

SUPER PACMAN
17 BIT SOFTWARE
1973

GAME


Yes, it's *that* game again... But while the game's principle remains the same, it's played in a much larger arena.

There are dozens of clones available in Public Domain software, but this one from the demo group Pendle Europa could be the grand-daddy of them all.

Super Pacman really lives up to its name – the game takes place on a huge scrolling maze which is at least four screens square in size.

The action moves very smoothly, including the scrolling and the sprites, and all the while a lively little tune is being played in the background. Apart from *Super Pacman's* technical achievements, when it comes to playing *Super Pacman*, you'll all be familiar with the old (even ancient) 'eat the dots and avoid the ghosts' formula.

While this obviously doesn't exactly constitute an advance in the gameplay concepts laid down by *Pacman* all those years ago, having the much larger maze means some new strategies have to be used if you are going to succeed.

Instead of being a direct copy of the *Pacman* arcade game – of which there are already far too many – *Super Pacman* is a valiant attempt at bringing a classic game idea up to date.

TOP TEN UTILITIES OF THE MONTH

Every month, we look at the best-selling utility and game PD disks from a particular library, so you can see what's popular...

AMIGANUTS

1	OctaMED
2	Amibase III
3	Amiga Coders Club (various)
4	AGene (Full Version)
5	TBAG (various)
6	Kefrens Powermenu
7	SID V2
8	Golf Recorder V3
9	Edword 2.2
10	Amicash Pro

WHERE TO GET THE DISKS IN THIS ISSUE

17 Bit Software, 1st Floor Offices, 2/8 Market Street, Wakefield WF1 1DH. Tel: 0924 366982

Deltrax PD, 36 Bodelwyddan Avenue, Old Colwyn, Clwyd LL29 9NP. Tel: 0492 515981

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001 AFRICAN	Talking drums, Marimbas, chants etc (53)	013 GUITARS	Acoustic, Electric & Distorted etc (41)
002 INDIAN INST	Sitars, Bansuri, Chants etc (19)	014 BASS GUITARS	Slap, picked, fretless, FX etc (44)
003 INDIAN PERC	Tablas, Bayas, Rhythm Loops etc (35)	015 ANALOG BASS	Oberheim, Roland, Korg etc (22)
004 ARABIC	Ud, Saz, Bendir, Rhythm Loops etc (37)	016 DIGITAL BASS	Yamaha DX, Roland, Korg etc (28)
005 FAR EAST	Tibetan Bells, Yangqin, Koto etc (31)	017 BRASS	Sections, Saxes, Trumpets etc (24)
006 EUROPEAN	Balalaika, Choirs, Bodhran etc (34)	018 SYNTH BRASS	Analog, Digital & L.A. etc (18)
007 OCEANIA	Didjeridu, Chants, Slit Drum etc (23)	019 PIANOS	Octave Splits, with strings, FX (16)
008 AMERICAS	Kena, Berimbau, Pan Pipes etc (30)	020 STRINGS	Cello, Orch, Hits, Sections etc (21)
009 FX PERC	Power Toms, Snares & Bass, Scratch & Rap (88)	021 SYNTH STRINGS	Analog & Digital (19)
010 DRUM KIT	Bass & Snares, Hi-Hats, Cymbal & Toms (63)	022 CHOIRS	Mixed Choirs, with Bells & Synth (16)
011 ANALOG PERC	TR-808 CR-78, Loops etc (30)	023 ORGANS	Church & Electric (17)
012 LATIN PERC	Timbales, Congas, Cabasas, Cowbells etc (107)	024 BELLS	Real & Synth, with Choir & Strings (20)

Each disk is priced at £2.50, any 10 for £19.95, the Complete Collection for £49.95. In addition, Sampler owners can use our **Digitally Mastered** Chrome, Metal, or DAT **sample Cassettes** which contain most of the above samples: COO1 **WORLD MUSIC COLLECTION** (175)
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★ NEWS FLASH ★

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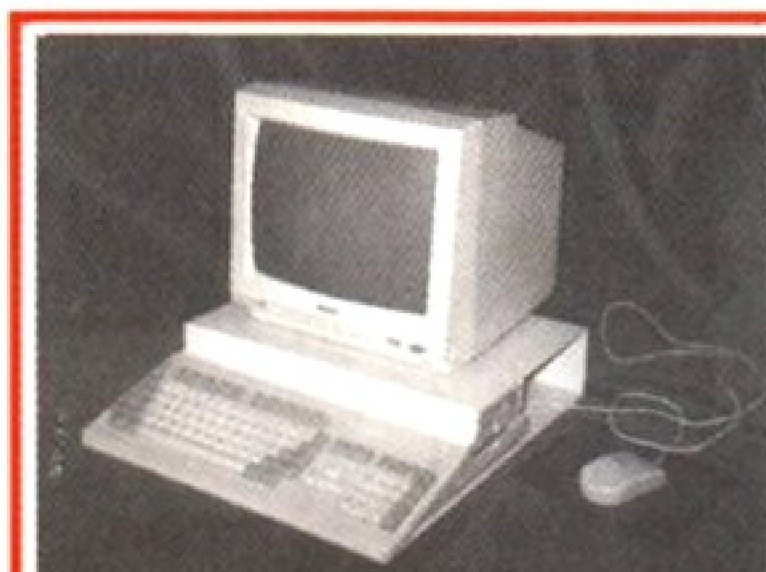
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PD Demo Zone



If you want to see just how far your Amiga can be stretched, demos are the ideal way to find out. Whether it's cartoon animations or glenz vectors (You what? – Ed), the Demo Zone offers it all. Let **Tim Howell** tell you about a selection of the latest and most interesting PD demo disks.

TRASH
17 BIT, DISK 1898 — DEMO



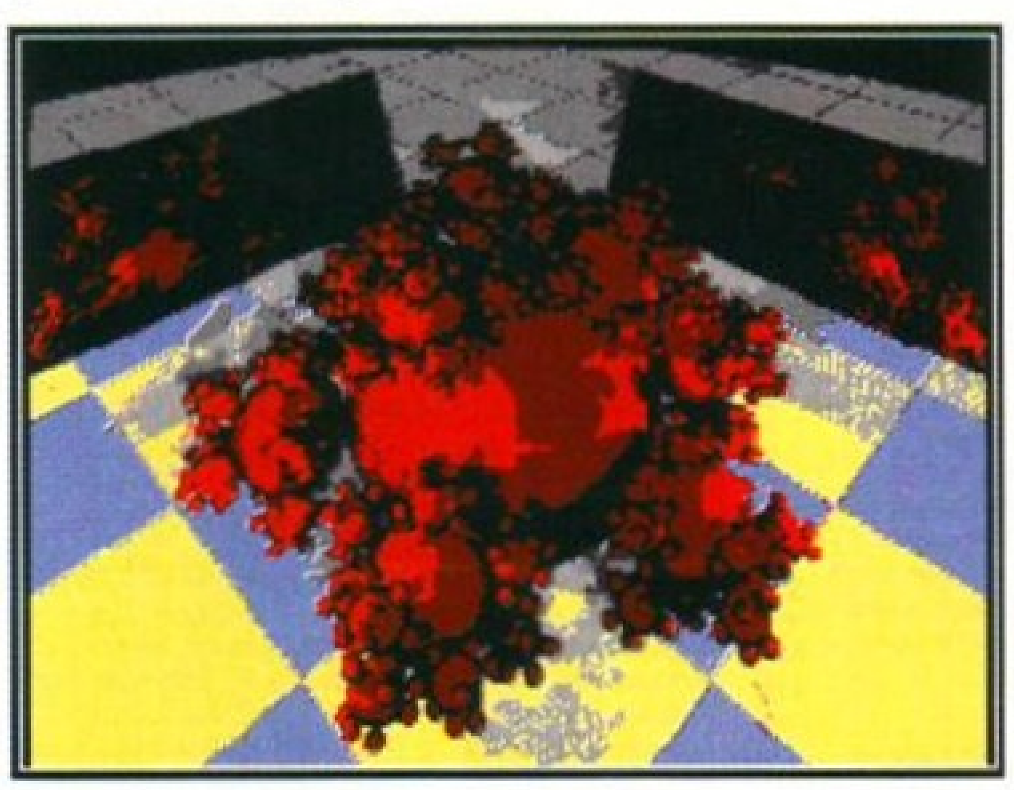
Technically, this part of *Trash* isn't all that impressive, but the mixture of fractals and vector objects looks great.

Thankfully *Trash* doesn't live up to its name. This is a megademo of above-average proportions from Digital. It consists of six varied and well-programmed parts. It doesn't start off very originally, because it begins with a ripped intro from *Shadow of the Beast* combined with a vector shape. This is the sort.of thing that was being done two years ago.

Thankfully, things improve after that. One of the most impressive techniques I've seen for a long time – even though it's rather simplistic – is a series of pixels that fly in and slowly make up a line vector, which then transforms into a filled vector and moves around the screen. It happens smoothly and it's a great effect.

Another attractive effect is a fractal-drawn landscape which has a vector balloon and boat moving across it. Again it's a simplistic technique, but the combination of the two types of graphics is effective. The rest of the demo is relatively unoriginal, although it is well-programmed, but seems to end very suddenly – after the credits appear, all you see is a blank screen.

OPTIMUS PRIME
17 BIT, DISKS 2003A,B (TWO DISKS) — DEMO



This attractive animated ray-traced image, consisting of dozens of objects, is a highlight of *Optimus Prime*..

For two disks, there doesn't seem to be a lot of substance, at least in terms of quantity. As for quality, it's technically impressive, although many parts are reminiscent of Crionics' excellent *Hardwired* megademo.

The techniques used range from a huge glenz vector which has 48 faces, to an animated ray-traced image, consisting of 620 balls and 22 frames of animation. The writers of the demo, Paradise, also have a dig at Anarchy's Space Cut section in their *Hardcore* demo (reviewed elsewhere on these pages) with their 'follow up' Cube Cut. The effect isn't noticeably different to Anarchy's attempt but it indicates we'll be seeing this technique in a lot of demos in the future.

Optimus Prime is a varied collection which doesn't consist of many parts, but they work well. For a change, this is entertaining and technically impressive.

HARDCORE
START COMPUTER SYSTEMS, NOT PLUS COMPATIBLE — DEMO



As is the norm in space, in *Hardcore* the sun shines light on a planet, creating a shadow on a chequered floor (??!?!)

Another megademo from prolific demo makers Anarchy, *Hardcore* isn't very innovative but there are a few variations of well-known techniques.

Things start off with an animated sun rotating around a planet. As the sun moves, it shines on the planet and a shadow appears which follows the path of the two spheres. One of the more interesting techniques is in the Space Cut section, which has two vector objects cutting into each other, with part of one vector disappearing as it cuts into the other. There's a similar section later on with a candle circling the vectors shining light on to the objects, creating a shadow.

Matrix Dots is also interesting, having hundreds of dots which swirl around the screen, being attracted to and passing through what effectively is a black hole, before being scattered again. There are several other bits, including a large vector graphics section, featuring some animated objects, and a fast-drawing fractal section which creates an uninteresting fractal in the shape of a gingerbread man.

Hardcore features some interesting variations of tried and trusted techniques, adding up to a moderately entertaining production.

RAVE VISION
17 BIT, DISK 2004 — MUSIC



Pump up the volume! While *Rave Vision*'s music doesn't sound particularly great, its presentation is very good.

This disk consists of five long dance tracks which feature some clear samples taken from well-known songs, including Altern-8 and Snap. The tracks themselves are

Continued on page 176

WHAT ARE PD DEMOS ALL ABOUT?

There are thousands of demos available for the Amiga, some good, some bad. Virtually all of them are freely distributable, meaning you can copy and distribute them without paying more than the cost of a disk.

Apart from looking and sounding great, demos play an important part in Amiga computing. They give Amiga coders an opportunity to stretch the machine in the areas of graphics and sound, utilising and discovering techniques in these areas that have never been used before. Many of these techniques end up appearing in games, either to improve presentation or as a part of the game itself. Also, the people who put together the demos — the coders, graphic artists and musicians — can get noticed by software companies who may then employ them for commercial work.

As for the average Amiga user, demos are an ideal way of seeing what your computer is capable of doing. You can see the computer's abilities stretched without paying a lot of money, and often you'll be entertained at the same time.

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PG012 ASI 5 Raid, Go Looly & Retaliator+
PG013 ASI 6 Pacman & 4 more - cool !
PG014 ASI 7 Moonbase, Trix, Mightworks
PG015 ASI 8 Airace2, Hball, + more !+
PG016 ASI 9 Battle pong & Blizzard
PG017 ASI 10 Escape, Pipeline, Pickout
PG018 ASI 11 Dad, Connex,Reversi & Trippin
PG019 ASI 12 Llamatron, Car, Powerpong
PG020 ASI 13 Twintris + more good games
PG021 ATIC ATAC Really playable ! +
PG023 BATTLEFORCE strategy war game
PG024 BLACKJACK Good card game !+
PG026 CASTLE OF DOOM Excellent! Get it +
PG027 CHINESE CHECKERS The board game+
PG028 COLOSSUS & WORLD Fab adventures !+
PG029 CROSSWORD COMPILER As it says !+
PG032 DRAGONS CAVE D&D style game Mega+
PG034 ETERNAL ROME Strategy & DOMINOES+
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PG048 HOLY GRAIL One of the best Text adventures+
PG053 LARN A superb text adventure game +
PG056 LASERZONE Great old 64 classic shoot em up!
PG057 LEAPING LARRY Good platform game in Amos
PG059 LORE OF CONQUEST space trading D&D game
PG060 MARBLE SLIDE Puzzle game, build slides up!
PG061 MASTER OF THE TOWN Shoot the signposts !
PG062 GRIDRUNNER, invaders & rebound - Excellent +
PG063 MORIA Text based D&D adventure
PG064 NAPOLEONIC WAR SIMULATOR strategy game!
PG065 NESTOR CARD GAME Good cards game +
PG066/67 NETHACK D&D Adventure needs 2 drives
PG068 NO MANS LAND Hi tech war game-shoot em up. +
PG069 NU GAME Mega Shoot em up with good graphics
PG070 PETERS QUEST Rescue the maiden ! +
PG071 POM POM GUNNER Like beach-head on the 64+
PG072 PROPERTY MARKET Become a millionaire !!!
PG074 RETURN TO EARTH Elite space trading game! +
PG076 SEVEN TILES Speedball type game-MEGA!
PG078 SCUM HATERS by Brazzle Atkins +
PG079 SEALANCE A submarine strategy game +
PG081 SERENE II Follow up to the above game +
PG093 TENNIS Good game (Some language) 1mg
PG094 TRAIN CONSTRUCTION KIT make your own tracks+
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PG111 MIDNIGHT THIEF A nice text adventure game!
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PG121 A500+ GAMES PACK 21 games to run on the plus
PG123 LEMMINGOIDS blast the (lemming?)Asteroids
PG124 TOTAL WAR "Risk" type game, Mega !+
PG125 CARD SHARP Klondyke, Demon, Castle etc! +
PG126 SKYFLYER Superb WWII shoot em up! +
PG127 AIRMANIA Super platform game from Addware +
PG128 CHEAT WORKS Stacks of new cheats
PG129 PUGGLES Brilliant Q*Bert game !
PG130 BATTLEMENTS Hunchback game You'll love it+
PG132 ASSASSINS 15 Excellent pack of games
PG133 ASSASSINS 16 Wastelands, Mission X, Pacman +
PG134 ASSASSINS 17 Tomcat, Defenda, Jetman
PG135 ASSASSINS 18 Henry in Panic & more
PG136 ASSASSINS 19 Growth,FranticFreddy & more!
PG138 BATTLE OF BRITAIN & WAR strategy war games
PG139 DUNGEONS OF MADROJ Excellent D&D game
PG140 MIND GAMES Stacks of fun with this !
PG141/3 SWORD OF WARLOCK RPG adventure 2drives
PG144 REVENGE OF THE MUTANT CAMELS Getit!!+
PG146 ASI GAMES 20 Four excellent games Get Em!+
PG147 QUADRIX Excellent puzzle game +
PG148 COSMIC RACER Space Harrier type game
PG149 A NIGHT AT THE TOWN Witty text adventure+

Education

PE001/5 EDUCATION SET science programs for ages 11+ +
PE006 KIDSPAINTFab little talking colouring book+
PE007/8 LEARN & PLAY Maths, spelling etc. 5-10 yrs +
PE009 STORYLAND 2 Save toyland from the witch! +
PE010 TOTAL CONCEPTS ASTROMOMY book on a disk.+
PE011 TOTAL CONCEPTS DINOSAURS Book on a disk+
PE013 SIMON & SPACE MATHS Talking maths program
PE014 SPANISH, FRENCH, GERMAN TUTOR Translator
PE015 TREASURE SEARCH find the lost treasure ! +

Business

PB001 AMICASH bank management program+
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PB010 JOURNAL Keep track of finances
PB011 MISC.BUSINESS Geotime, Grocery list, Calc
PB012 QBASE Simple 8 field database
PB013 QED Simple & effective text ed+
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PB016 UEDIT LATEST RELEASE Good TextEd+
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PB019 600 LETTERS contracts, letters + more+
PB020 TEXT ENGINE 3.0 Good simple Wordpro+
PB021 AMIBASE PRO. Powerful easy to use Dbase +
PB022 BBASE II A fast & easy to use.+
PB023 FORMS REALLY UNLIMITED form creation prog+
PB024 LAST WILL & TESTAMENTS Just in case !+

Utilities & Applications

PU002 A-GENE Good geneology program +
PU003 A68K 68000 Assember program
PU004a/b A64 EMULATOR NEW VERSION 2.0 (2)
PU005 AMATEUR RADIO 1 Interest to radio hams +
PU006 ANIMATED POINTER PACK Moving pointers!
PU012 ASI GRAFFIX UTILS graphics convertors etc+
PU013 ASI BOOT UTILITIES bootblock utilities +
PU015 BIORYTHMS, STARCHART 2 Good programs+
PU017/20 C MANUAL II (4) Learn to program !!!
PU021 C-LIGHT RAY TRACER Good program+
PU022 CHEMESTHETICS molecule displayer +
PU023 CHET SOLACE UTILS 26 utilities
PU036 CURSER BASIC COMPILER Just what you need!+
PU037 D-COPY The best PD disk copier +
PU039 DBW The foreunner to Skulpt 3D !!! +
PU040 DEMOLISHER 168 UTILTIES - MEGA !+
PU041/43 DESKBENCH alternative workbench (3)
PU045 DIRECT ACTION Edit animation sequences etc.
PU047 DOPE INTROMAKER Make your own intros
PU048 DYNAMITE FONTS II CutNPaste fontscreens
PU049 DYNAMITE FONTS More CutNPaste Fonts
PU055 ELECTROCAD DEMO circuit designer +
PU056 EXILE FONTS Excellent CnP fonts+
PU058 FONTS AND RAM MANAGER BIG video fonts+
PU059 FONTS & SURFACES Backdrops & fonts+
PU061 GENESIS DEMO fractal generator really good!
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PU071 JR COMM 1.02 Modem users comms package
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PU073/76 KING JAMES BIBLE Old&New testaments (4)+
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PU078 M-CAD Hires design package. Excellent +
PU079 MACVIEW,DRAW,ROTATE 3 unusual progs.Good!
PU080 MESSY-SID Read/Write PC Files, Brilliant!+
PU083 MORSE PROGRAMS for the radio hams.
PU084 HARDWARE MODS Docs disk for hardware hacks!
PU086/7 NORTH C 1.3 (2) Complete C compiler & libs+
PU089 PASCAL COMPILER needs a good CLI knowledge+
PU091 PENDLE 200 MEGAUTILS An essential collection+
PU095 PRINTER DRIVER GENERATOR new drivers+
PU096 PRINTER DRIVER UTILITIES Various utils etc.
PU097 PRINT STUDIO V1.25 Prints pics & text etc.+
PU101 QUICKBENCH Instant WB uses RAD: very clever!
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PU108 ROT A simple 3D drawing package.Very popular.+
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PU112/3 SOMETHING FOR NOTHING Video Utils&Fonts+
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PU115 ST EMULATOR Run Atari ST software !! 2 Drives
PU116 SUPER 'C' DISK Collection of C commands
PU117 SUPERKILLERS Virus Killers! You need this! +
PU121/2 TV GRAPHICS Dpaint backdrops&Fonts+
PU124 ULTIMATE ICONS Iconmaster,Iconlab,+
PU128 VECTOR DESIGNER Comprehensive program
PU129/30 VIDEO APPLICATIONS Video utilities+
PU132/3 WINDOWSBENCH A Windows 3/WB2 lookalike
PU134 WORKBENCH HACKS amusing stuff !
PU136 ZX SPECTRUM EMULATOR Now with sound +
PU138 LAST HOPE Recover lost files
PU139 GRAPHICS CONVERTERS PC>AMiga gfx Converter
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Animations

PA001 AEGIS ANIMATIONS 3 classics !
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PA033 BUSY BEE Cute animation of a freaky bee
PA036 CX1 SPACESHIP Excellent RT anim +
PA038 DRAGONS LAIR TIME WARP Cartoon +
PA039 ERIC-S AMY VS WALKER Cute & sexy! 1.5M
PA040 ERIC-S BATMAN vs JOKER Very funny!!!+
PA041 ERIC-S COTOTE 2 A corker!! 2M
PA043 ERIC-S MORE AEROTOONS Very witty !!!+
PA044 ERIC-S SHUTTLECOCK plays with satallite.
PA045 ERIC-S STEALTHY II Mig-29 vs Stealthy !+
PA049 HAPPY ANIMATIONS HappyMan & more
PA053/4 LIGHT CYCLES (2) Tron animation+
PA056 MAGICIAN II Good RT animation+
PA060 NEWTONS CRADLE RT animation +
PA065/68 REAL 3D (4) Superb of the program+
PA072 THE JUGGLER A classic amiga demo!+
PA074 THE WALKER vs The Helicopter - Mega !+
PA075 THE WALKER vs A2000 A classic ! +
PA080 LEMMINGS ANIMATION Very funny indeed +
PA083 MORE CLASSY ANIMS The Bionic Bimbo !+
PA084 JAMES POND v LEMMINGS I like it !!!+
PA085 JET ANIMATION Fractal Flight but better! +
PA086 FRACTAL ANIMATION full screen low flying anim! +
PA087 TEA POT ANIMATION Very good RT anim
PA088/9 MR POTATO HEAD:The circus act!!! (2)

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AGA36 BIRD OF PREY an excellent animation 1m +
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PowerAnims

PP001/2 ANTI LEMMINGS (2) This is Brilliant! 2M
PP004/7 AUTOMATED LIGHT (4) Battlestar galactica! 3M
PP011/12 DATING GAME (2) Very witty!, Get it. 3.5M!
PP016 GULF WAR Another ES production! Good 2M!
PP018/20 LOST IN SPACE (3) From the TV series 2M
PP025/27 STATION AT KHARN (3) Incredible 2M demo
PP040/43 AT THE MOVIES II (4) Hilarious ! 1mg>3mg
PP044/45 AMY V WALKER II (2) Another witty ES demo 3M

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PD020 CRIONICS MEGADEMO maddona demo & more
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PM066 PHENOMENA MUSIC DREAMS II And this !+
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CLE01 TOTAL CONCEPTS DINOSAURS Have your children ever wanted to know about the ancient world of the dinasaur ? If so, then this is for you - an interactive encyclopedia covering jurassic, triassic & createaceous periods complete with pictures and text. This program is plus compatible and comes on 2 Disks. £4.50 +



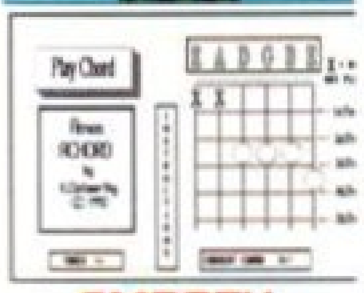
CLE02 TOTAL CONCEPTS GEOLOGY Thit title is the second in the series of quality programs by Chris hill, using the GoldDisk Hyperbook system, and will you and your children an interactive guided tour through the incredible world volcanos, rocks and minerals. the program is very simple to use just point and click. Geology is on 2 Disks £4.50 +



CLE03 TOTAL CONCEPTS SOLAR SYSTEM The latest title in this series invites you to learn all about the solar system, with information on all of the planets and with some of the pictures supplied and authorised by Nasa, this makes and excellent educational package for children. This title is so big it is supplied on Three disks and is priced at £4.99. +



CLE04 KIDDIES COLOURING PAD This is a colouring book for young children and they wont get in a mess using it ! It is very simple to use with full instructions with the program. Simply pick a picture and colour it in ! Includes a save option, so once you have coloured you picture you can save it out to a disk to print out using Dpaint etc. Price £3.50 +

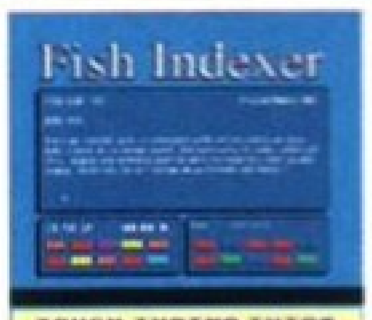


CLE05 A-CHORD So you want become the next Eric Clapton then this is just what you need ! This program will teach you nearly every single guitar chord including fingering techiniques, it will even *play* the chords using the amigas built in sound chip. A must for every single guitar player beginner and experts alike. Price £3.50 +

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created with VIDEO TITLES

CLU01 VIDEO TITLER is a program that will allow you to create smooth scrolling video titles with the greatest of ease, programmed by Darren Mccaul, whose Starbase is due out soon, the program lets you use any amiga bitmap font, of which several are supplied, and scroll in any colour vertically up the screen. Essential for all video enthusiasts. £3.50 +



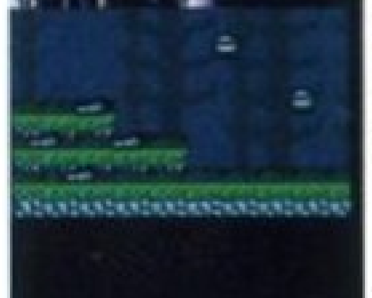
CLU02 FISH INDEXER If you have ever wanted a program, but have never been able to find it ANYWHERE chances are it's probably in the fish library. but rather than having to rake through thousands of lines of text, why not use the Fish indexer, a superb database of the entire Fred Fish library, with full search, print and more.Price £3.50+



CLU03 TYPING TUTOR A program here now for all you budding office clerks, learning to type can be a real pain, lessons cost a fortune, but not when you have an amiga ! This program will take you step by step through a full typing course, showing where to place your fingers and lots more. Before long you'll be able to type as fast as I can ! Price £3.50 +



CLG01 NORRIS A machine code programmed platform adventure starring Norris, help him journey his way through level after level battling beastly beasts and montstrous medieval men ! This game has a great atmosphere, and is immensley playable, it will have you addicted in minutes ! Price £3.50



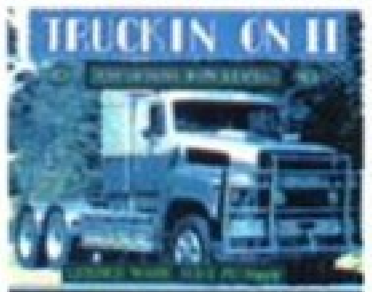
CLG02 DARK THINGS Another excellent quality platform game along similar lines to MarioLand, you know - scrolly along, then run & jump kind of thing, so your kids will love it, we did, and we're just a bunch of of kids at heart ! Price £3.50 +



CLG03 PHASE 2 Superb sideways scrolling shoot em up, along similar lines to the all time classic defender, anyway you control a photon powered XZ-1B fighter and you must battle with the forces of evil ! The gameplay is brilliant and the scrolling and animation silky smooth, if you want my advice - buy it. Price £3.50 +



CLG04 X-SYSTEM This is a corker a superb multilevel shootemup, you know the type, balst your way through hoard after hoard of aliens and end of level guardians, it even has a built in platform game thrown into the bargain, programmed by the BadBoyz this is one of the best shootemups about, get it and prepare to be impressed. price £3.50 +



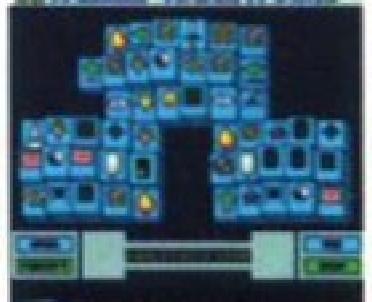
CLG05 TRUCKIN ON This is a new version of a PD game that was originally bugged to hell, the programmer has taken all the main elements of the game and re-programmed it in C, so its now fully playable truck driving simulation and management program. TO is a must for all you truckers out there and is supplied on 2 disks Priced at only £4.50 +



CLG06 OBLITERATION This game has had many a rave review, programmed in machine coed its fast & furious arcade action as you work your way thru this asteroid infested game, blasting wave after wave of rocks, this game is utterly addictive and includes a bonus game MAD BOMBER which is as addictive as the main game. A must for all gamers ! Price £3.50



CLG07 WILLYS WATER WORKS If its puzzle games you like then we've got just what you want, you control willy, a plumber, whose job it is to built a pipeline using the pipes he has before the water starts to flow, and this certainly isnt as easy as it sounds ! A superb little game that will have you and you kids(?) entertained for hours. £3.50



CLG08 DRAGON TILES This is an excellent puzzle game you have a huge stack of different icons which, using the mouse you must match up to make a level disappear, sounds boring but its actually very addictive, I was playing it for hours ! A Vast improvement on the PD version, Dragon tiles is well worth anyones couple of quid ! Price £3.50 +



CLG09 MOTOR DUEL Now this is just fabulous ! Martin would not leave this game alone for days, its a 3D car racing-chasing-shooting game, with guided missles and lasers, its by the same programmer as the PD game Battlecars, but its a lot better, play the computer (Mega difficult) or link up to anoth amiga for 1 on 1 action ! Price £3.50 +

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SWEET REVENGE

ANIM

NBS, DISK P064, REQUIRES 1.5MB

Demo group Decay return after last month's brilliant *Get Frogged*, with yet another quality animation. This one's based on the famous Road Runner cartoons and is a longer sequence than the animation we looked at last time.

After the familiar Loony Toons intro, the animation moves on to the main act which features the Road Runner and his arch enemy, Wile E Coyote. In contrast to the cartoons though, this time Wile E actually manages to catch the normally evasive Road Runner.

After stalking the bird as he zooms down the road, Wile E shoots him to pieces with his trusty machine gun (in typically unrealistic cartoon-style fashion, I hasten to add). After Road Runner has been blasted to bits, his remains are put into a sack which Wile E drops from the top of a cliff. Then, just to make sure the bird is well and truly finished, the coyote drops a one ton weight on top of where Road Runner landed.

Technically, the animation is very good. *Sweet Revenge* moves smoothly and there are cartoon-style sound effects played simultaneously with the action. It's very professionally done, and if Decay used some imagination to create their own cartoon characters they could soon, perhaps, even rival Eric Schwartz.



"Ah, there's that bird coming now," thinks Wile E as he spots Road Runner zooming down the highway.



Wile E fires a round of bullets into Road Runner's body, getting his *Sweet Revenge* at long last.



And even though Road Runner's bacon is well and truly fried, Wile E drops a weight on him to make sure.

uninspiring, but if you're into this type of music (and I'm not) then you could get something out of it.

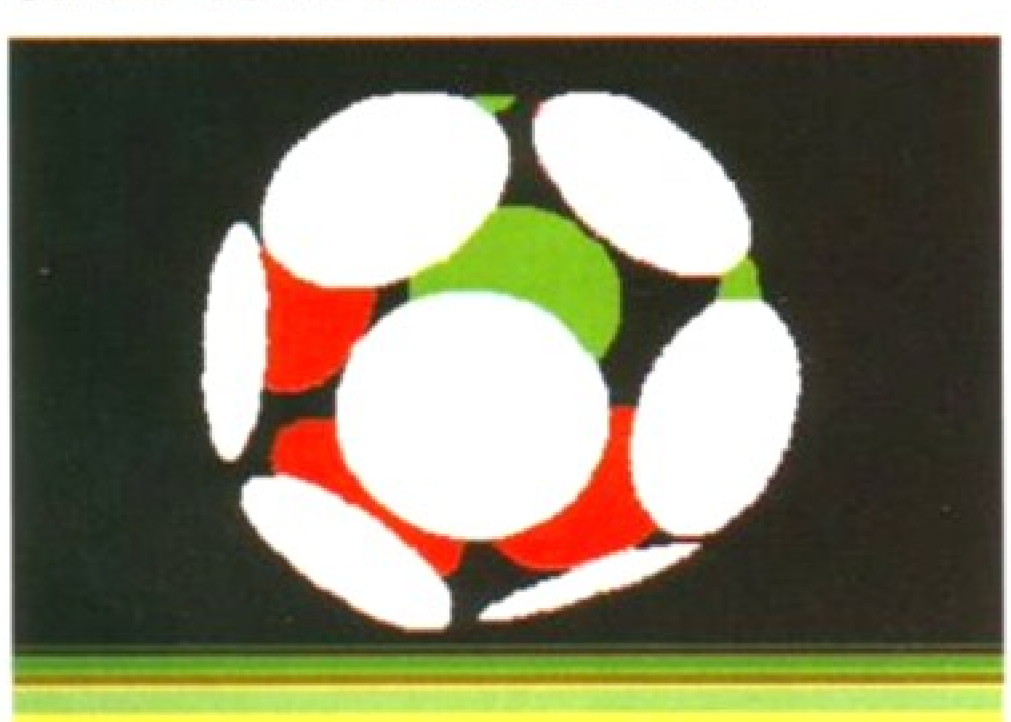
What makes this disk different from many other music disks around is its presentation. A CD player and amplifier have been drawn on-screen, which isn't new, but the number of options open to you is. By moving a cursor around the screen, you can not only select different tracks but you can do heaps of other things as well, including switching the balance so you can only hear music out of either the left or right speaker, adjusting the speed at which the music is played and so on.

While the music is dance-orientated and not brilliant, the interesting presentation adds to the disk.

MAGNETIC DREAMS

DEMO

START COMPUTER SYSTEMS



While this part of *Magnetic Dreams* looks suspiciously like a football, it is actually a series of circular vectors.

Digital make another appearance in this section, this time with *Magnetic Dreams*. It's another collection of familiar techniques which have been adapted to try and make them more interesting.

One of these sections features a large round object, comprising several vector circles, which end up looking a lot like a glenz vector soccer ball. It all moves smoothly and looks impressive, although the colours are a bit bland.

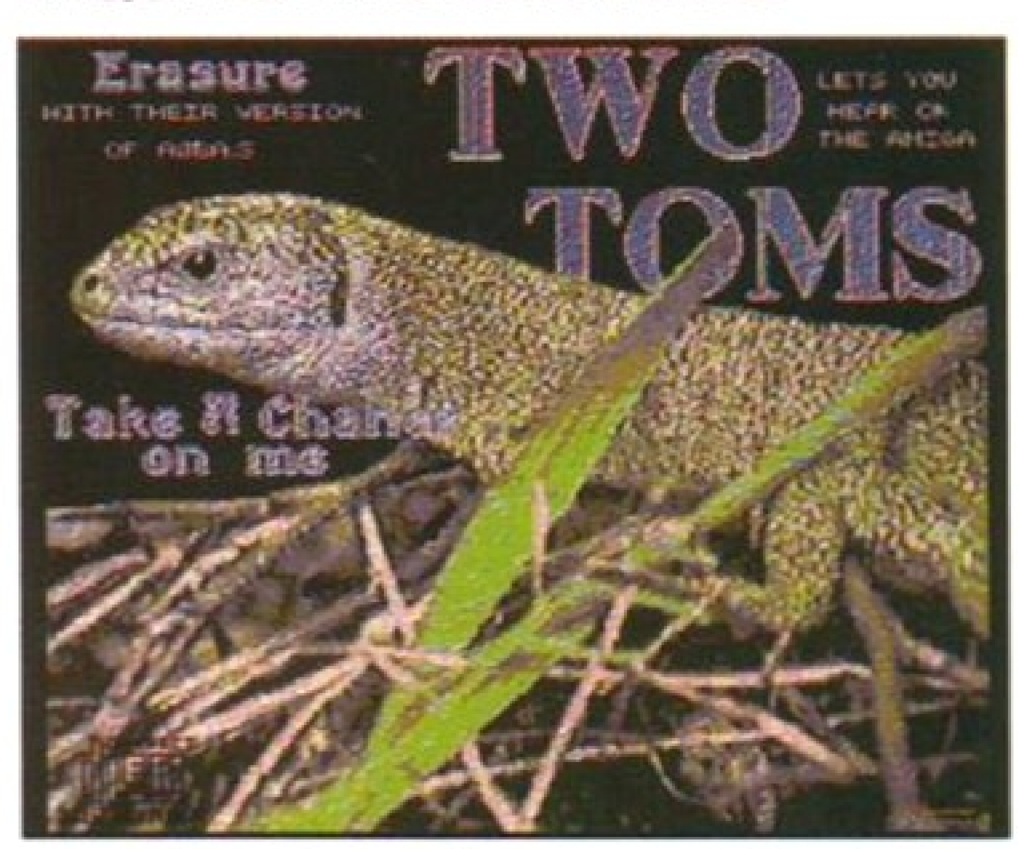
Another section has a number of multi-coloured filled vector objects, ranging from simple ones such as cones and cylinders (which make use of circle vectors) to more complicated objects such as Grand Prix cars and fighter planes which consist of several vectors. Some of them are also animated. Not original, but still well done. The only other section worthy of note is called Shade Bobs, which has dozens of different coloured and colour-cycling bobs rapidly appearing on-screen. The overall effect is much like a plasma fractal, but these are drawn much more quickly.

All-in-all, it's a mixed collection of innovative and not-so-innovative techniques which add up to a technically-adept but uninspiring production.

TWO TOMS – TAKE A CHANCE ON ME

MUSIC

17 BIT, DISK 2049 (TWO DISKS) REQUIRES TWO DISK DRIVES



To mark Erasure's recent chart success, the Two Toms celebrate by drawing a lizard. Why, I don't know.

Fresh from a run of several weeks at number one, Erasure's Abba-esque EP makes it on to floppy disk (well the main track, *Take A Chance On Me* does) courtesy of those superior samplers, Two Toms.

Considering the single was so popular, it could go down well with Amiga owners who want to listen to Erasure with the help of their Amigas. As seems to be the norm with the Two Tom's releases, the track comes on two disks and the sample is loaded in as it is played. You also need two disk drives if you want to listen to the second disk of the song. As for sound quality, it's as good as ever, with the samples sounding clear and distinct, with no distortion. While the music is playing, there's an 'interesting' screen displayed, featuring a large lizard. Why a lizard, I don't know. Mind you, a lot of the Two Tom's graphics don't have anything to do with the music which is playing.

Unfortunately, while the sound quality is very good, the rather boring screen display makes this production of limited long-term interest unless you really like Erasure's Abba tribute. I wonder if the other three tracks on the EP will be converted?

TOP TEN DEMOS OF THE MONTH

One good way of sussing out what demos are worth buying is to see what the top-selling demos of the moment are, so here's a look ...

17 BIT SOFTWARE

1.	Hardwired	1562 A+B
2.	Oddysey	1574 A,B,C,D,E
3.	CAT Computer Club	1781
4.	Andromeda DOS	1883
5.	Punisher Demo	1599
6.	Voyager (Razor 911)	1604
7.	Anarchy Demo	1893
8.	Virtual Worlds	1178
9.	Phenomena Enigma	913
10.	Silents' Ice	1193

WHERE TO GET THE DISKS IN THIS ISSUE

NBS: 1 Chain Lane, Newport, Isle of Wight PO33 2QQ

17 BIT: 2-8 Market Street, Wakefield, West Yorkshire WF1 1DH. Tel: 0924 366982

Start Computer Systems: 20 Holmside, Sunderland SR1 3JE. Tel: 091-565 2506

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- **Draws power from computer—works with any power standard**
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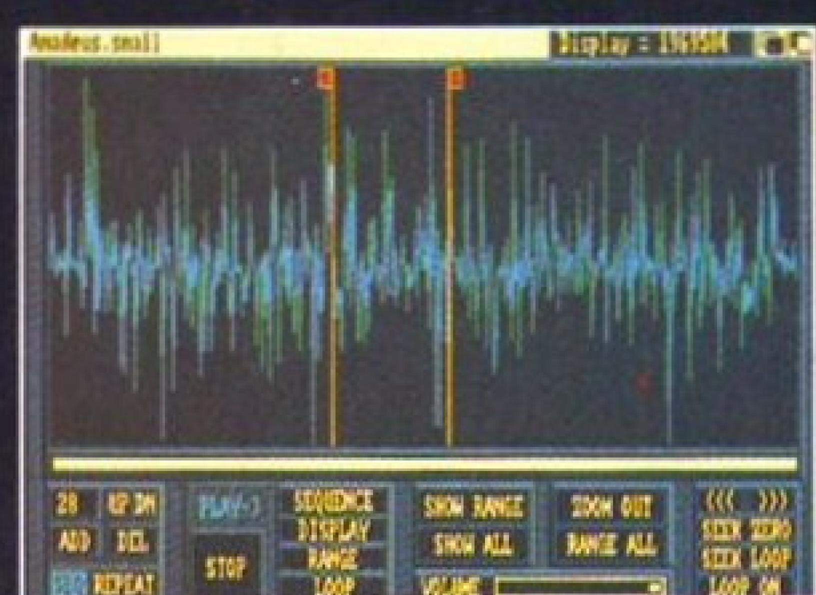
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★ 8372 FATTER AGNUS	£38	~~£49~~	• Enables you to access 1Mb of chip memory with standard modification
★ 8375 2MB FATTER AGNUS		£65	• Enables you to access a full 2Mb of chip memory when fitted in adaptor board
★ NEW 8375 2MB PRO AGNUS BOARD Provides 2Mb of chip memory when fitted to A500/A200/CDTV includes Agnus & memory		£139	Overcomes software compatibility problems at the flick of a switch
★ 2.04/1.3 KICKSTART SWITCHBOARD	£18	~~£24~~	• Allows existing A500 Plus owners to run old software when used in conjunction with switchboard
★ KICKSTART 1.3	£28	~~£36~~	• Upgrades A500 Plus memory to 2Mb chip memory.
★ A500 PLUS 1MB UPGRADE		£39	
★ GVP 52MB A500 HARD DRIVE		£359!	
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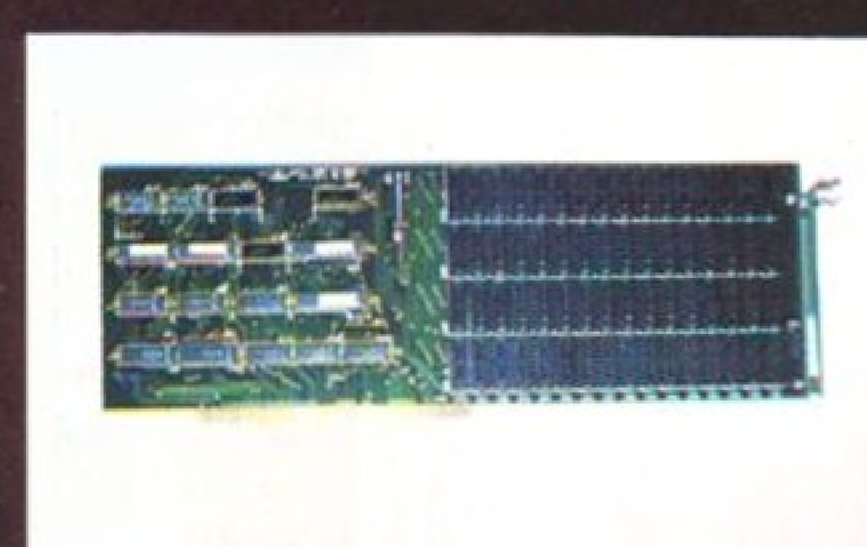
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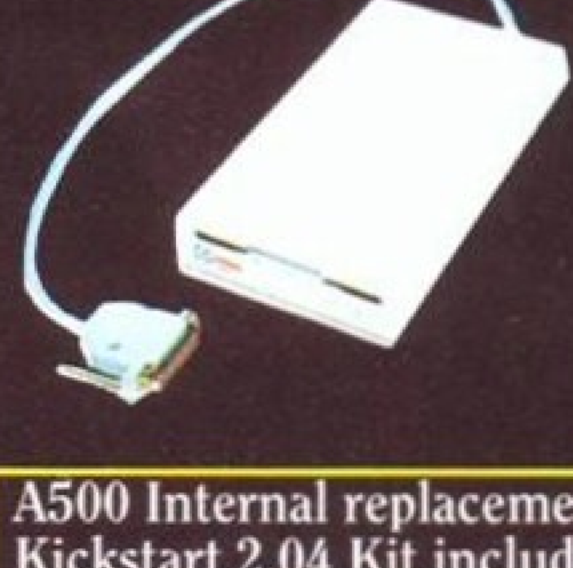
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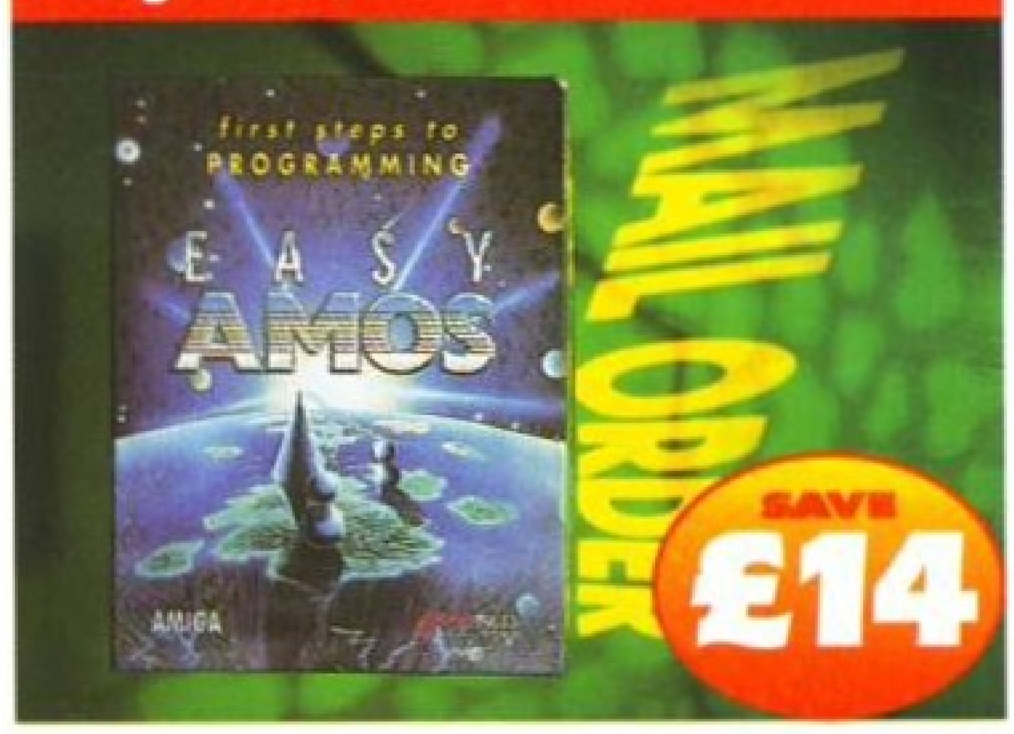
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Easy Amos



Specially designed for the beginner, *Easy AMOS* is more than just a computer language. Based on the highly successful *AMOS*, it has many more examples and detailed explanations to help you learn.

Description	Price	Order No
Easy AMOS	**£29.99**	**AF247**

Two Great Games

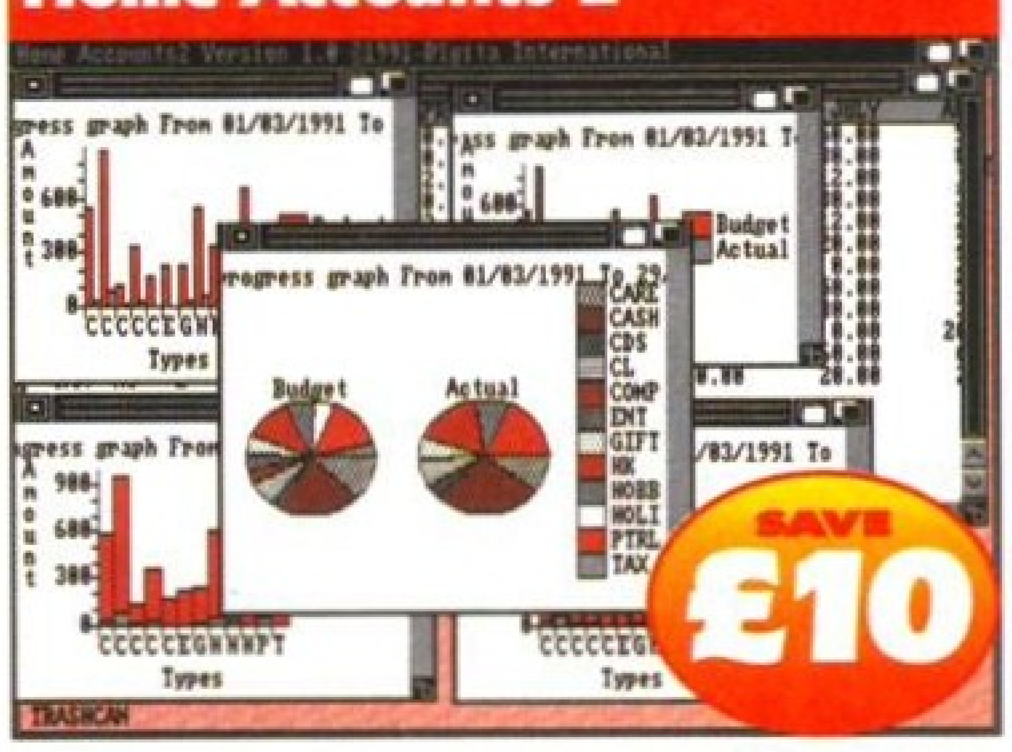


A fantastic package with Imageworks' *First Samurai* arcade adventure doubling up with another Format-Gold winning game: *Mega-lo-Mania*, the strategy game from Sensible Software.

Description	Price	Order No
Two for one	**£24.99**	**AFMegSam**

Amiga Format Mail Order

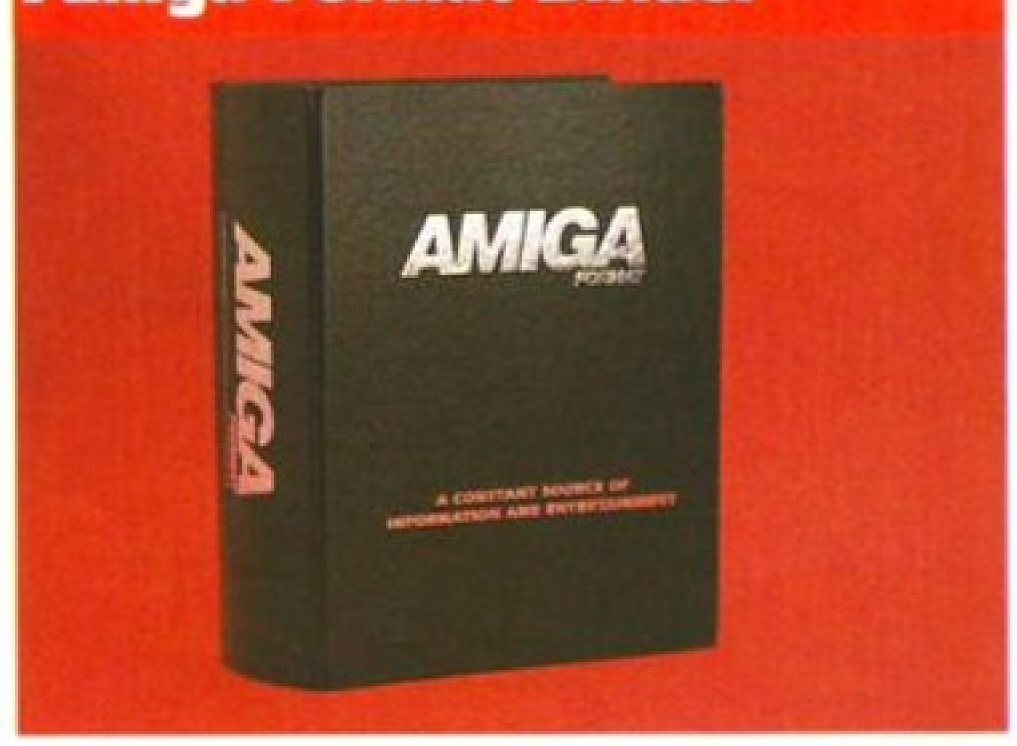
Home Accounts 2



Described by ***Amiga Format*** as "a package which will suit any household", this is the ideal way to keep track of your financial affairs, from what's in your cheque account to how much is left after the bills!

Description	Price	Order No
Home Accounts 2	**£44.99**	**AF229**

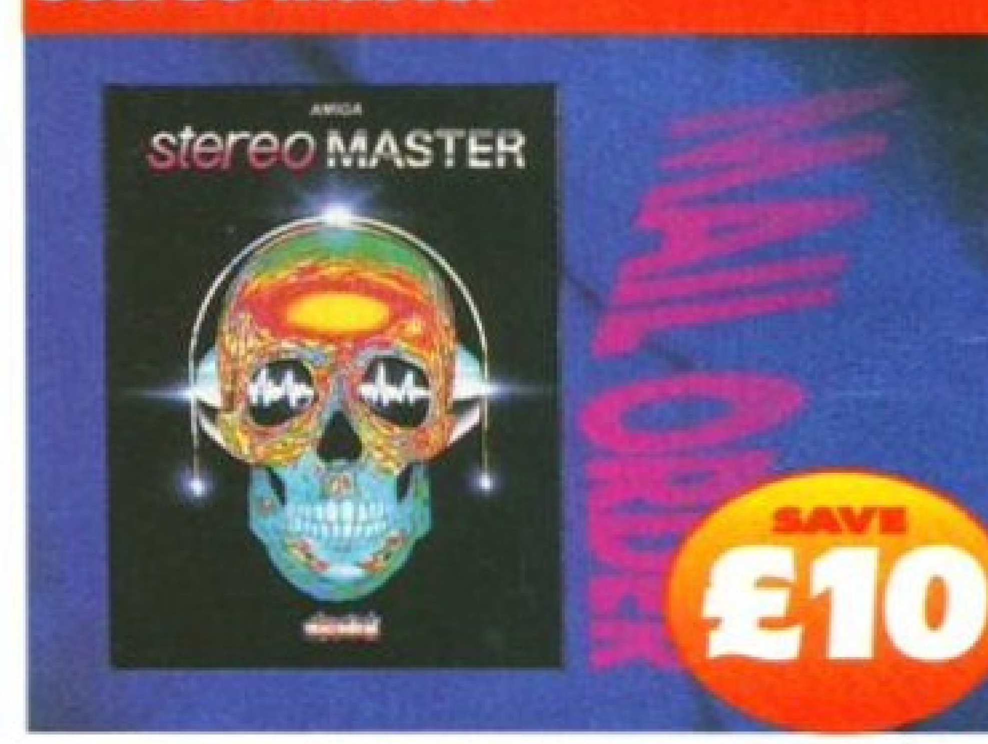
Amiga Format Binder



Are you tired of all your ***Amiga Formats*** being left scattered on the coffee table? Well protect them with these black-and-silver binders.

Description	Price	Order No
One binder	**£4.95**	**AF108**
Two binders	**£9.00**	**AF109**

Stereo Master



This update of Microdeal's *MasterSound* is an ideal entry level sound sampler. Its numerous features, and improved easy-to-use graphic interface, make this an excellent bargain for budding music freaks.

Description	Price	Order No
Stereo Master	**£29.99**	**AF234**

New Technosound Turbo



Newly updated sampler from New Dimensions allows you to grab digitised sounds, then sequence them into simple compositions. Package contains new cartridge, updated manual *and* set of audio leads.

Description	Price	Order No
Technosound Turbo	**£29.95**	**AF246**

Award Winners Compilation



What a combination! Format Gold ground-breaker *Populous*, stunning footie fun in *Kick Off*, the cartoon-on-a-disk *Space Ace* and the top-class puzzle game *PipeMania:* all rolled into one great package.

Description	Price	Order No
Award Winners Comp	**£20.99**	**AF245**

10 Great Games Comp

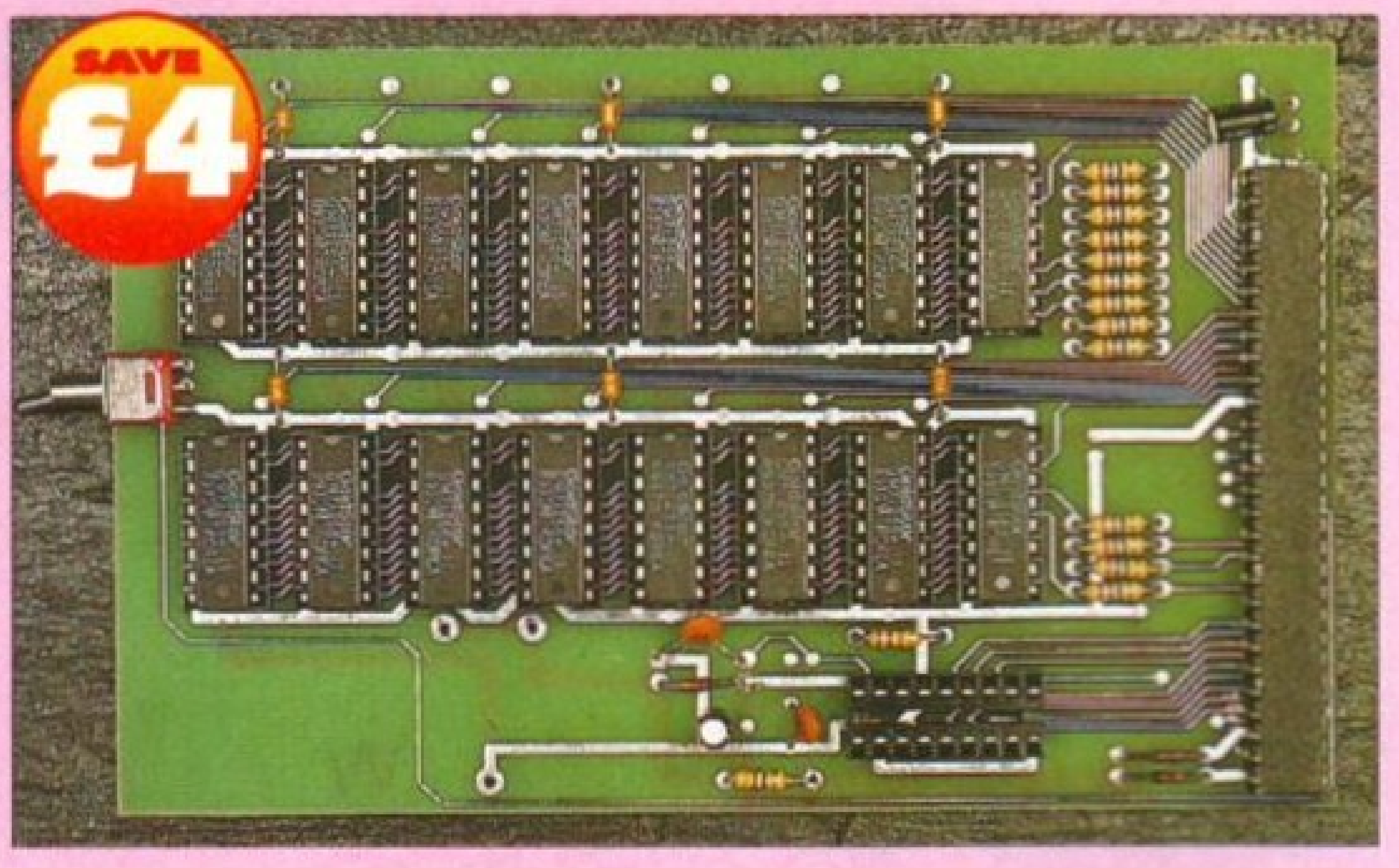


Xenon 2, Pro Tennis Tour, Ferrari Formula One, Nighthunter, Rick Dangerous, Super Ski, Pick 'n' Pile, Carrier Command, Chicago and Satan. (Doesn't work on an A500 Plus).

Description	Price	Order No
10 Great Games	**£24.99**	**AFGGComp**

The Amiga Format star buys

512K Expansion



AMIGA FORMAT STAR BUY

Admittedly this memory expansion from WTS in the UK, probably isn't the most glamourous memory expansion that you're ever likely to see for your Amiga. But don't worry about that because it gets the job done, and it also means we can bring all you 512K users out there the memory expansion that you need, but for the lowest possible price!

It also comes with a battery-backed-up clock, so you need never have to set the time again. More and more software is being produced now that will only work properly if you have a one megabyte machine: and if you don't have an expansion, then you're also missing out on the complete full-price programs that are part of the ***Amiga Format*** Collection, like *Vista*, brought to you on Coverdisk 33, *PageSetter* (Coverdisk 34), *Spectracolor* (35), *CanDo* (36) or this month's excellent *IntroCAD*. So now you can expand your mind and your Amiga. Get upgraded!

Description	Price	Order No
512K RAM Expansion	**£25.99**	**AM237**

Fun School 4

AMIGA FORMAT STAR BUY

Are you sick of your kids just blasting away at swarms of mutant aliens? Do you want them to be eager to learn something useful from their Amiga, other than what the level codes are for the latest game to hit the top of the Penguin charts?

Well fret no longer, because the latest versions of the top-selling home educational programs are now available through ***Amiga Format*** Mail Order! The *Fun School* series from Europress Software aims to teach some of the basic educational skills to children, but to do it via enjoyable games. The new series comes in three different flavours, and it is aimed at three different age groups: Teddy looks after the under fives, Freddie the Frog caters for the five-to-seven year olds, while Sammy the Spy is there for eight-to-elevens. Each age level has six different games, which teaches and tests various facts and concepts.

Description	Price	Order No
Teddy Disk	**£17.99**	**AM231**
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The AMIGA FORMAT Collection

Superb, complete full-price programs for practically nothing isn't the whole story of the **Amiga Format** Collection. You also have the chance to upgrade to new versions of the Collection programs at special prices. Here are the offers.



Sequencer One Plus Upgrade Kit

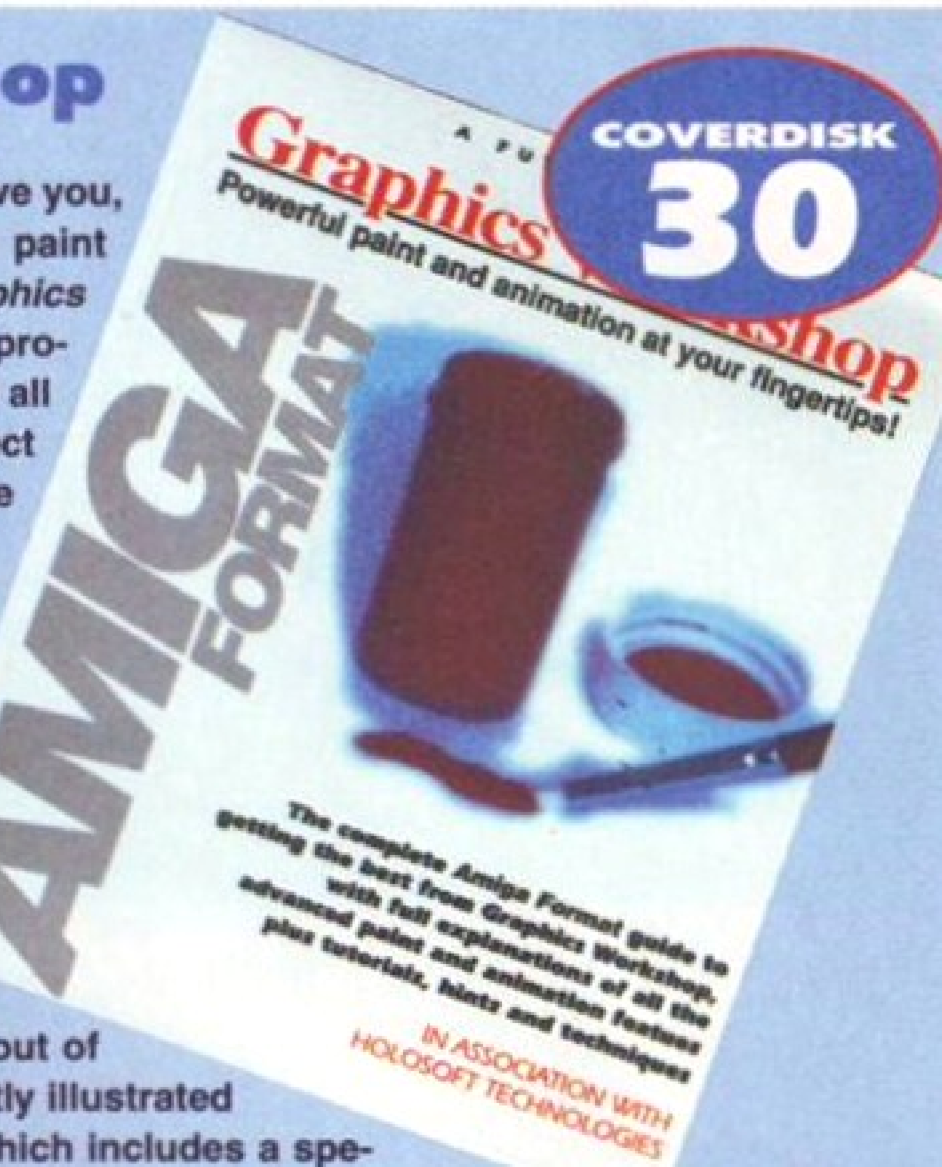
Also on the Special Christmas Issue was the powerful *Sequencer One* music package, RRP £89. (If you missed out on this amazing offer – which included *Graphics Workshop* as well – you can still get copies through Back Issues on Page 186.)

Through ***Amiga Format*** Mail Order you can upgrade to *Sequencer One Plus*. By doing so you can take advantage of a whole host of extra features that are not available on version one. These include the unique Juke Box screen and Gajits' new 'Diamond Drag' note-editing system. Also included in this latest update is tempo maps, auto count in, MIDI sys ex handling, track solo, extra quantis options and much more!

All of this should really sell for a massive RRP of £129.95. For a short time though, *Sequencer One Plus* is available as an upgrade kit for *Sequencer One* owners (and that of course includes everyone who has the program from the ***Amiga Format*** Coverdisk 30) for £49.95 (RRP). But we're offering it to you at a mere £39.95, which works out at an amazing total saving of £90.

Description	Price	Order Code
Sequencer One Plus	**£39.95**	**AM235**

Graphics Workshop



On our Christmas Special Issue we gave you, for practically nothing, the powerful paint and animation program, *The Graphics Workshop.* What makes this drawing program so special, though, is along with all the normal tools that you would expect from a top paint program are some powerful additional utilities.

You're not just limited to using just one custom brush, instead you can pick up and store up to 10 brushes and use them at any time. It also features not only ANIM and Animbrush forms of animation, but also a Cell system which is probably the most powerful animation system there is for the Amiga. Why not get the most out of this top program by buying this expertly illustrated instruction book and tutorial guide (which includes a special tutorial disk as well) which has been specially rewritten by *Amiga Format* writer Maff Evans.

Description	Price	Order Code
Graphics Workshop	**£16.40**	**GPHWK**

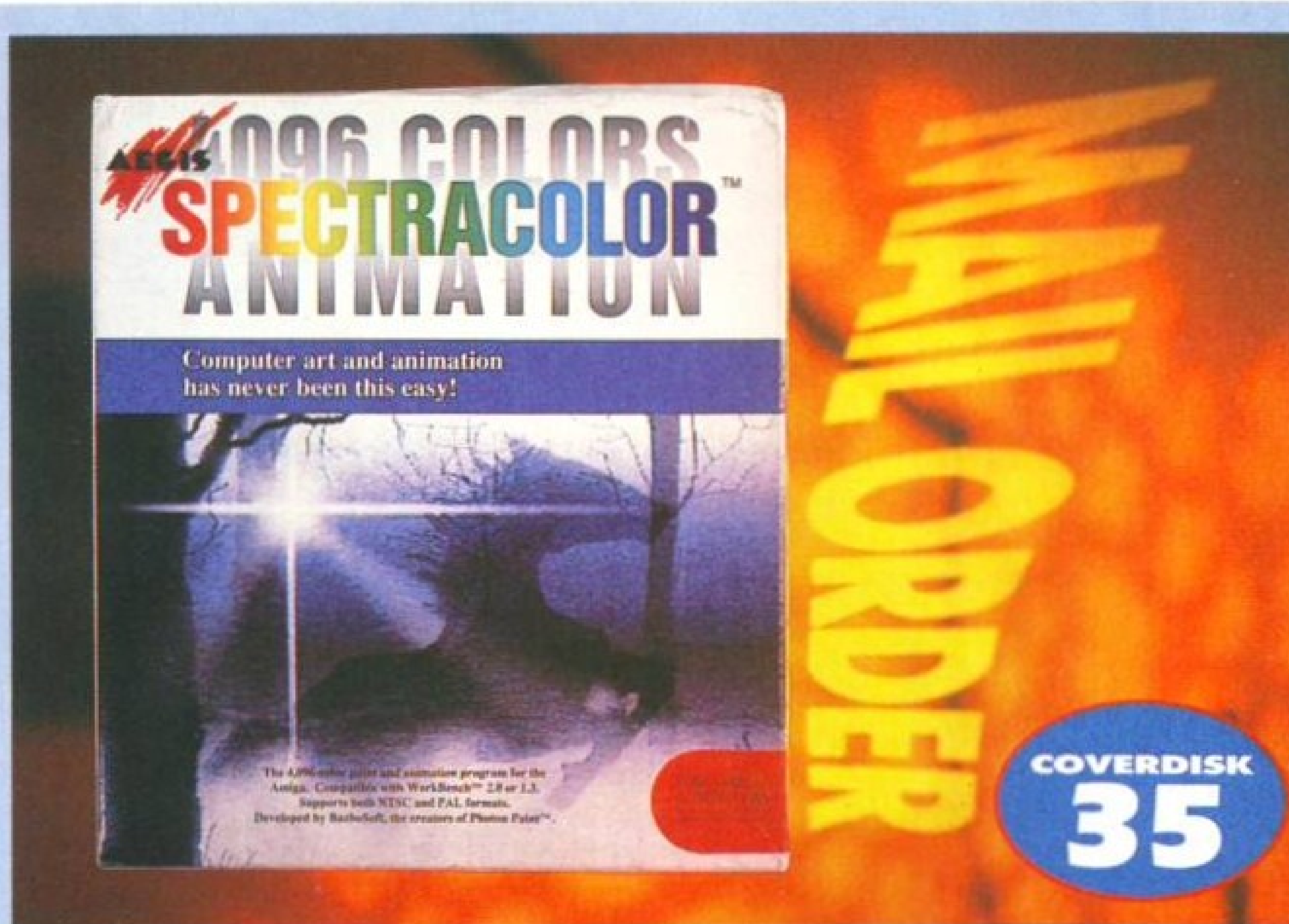
PageSetter 2



If you want to produce a news letter for your local rugby club, or start up a footie fanzine then you all you need is some DTP software. And there's no better program to start off with than *PageSetter*. We gave away version 1.2 of this very first Amiga DTP program on the Coverdisk of Issue 34, however if you want the current version here it is.

Gold Disk's update of the beginner's layout program takes a different approach from the original. It has been completely rewritten in machine code for extra speed. Also rather than having separate text editing and picture editing modules, it now lets you edit text on the page. It also uses Compugraphic scalable fonts throughout, so extra quality on print-out is guaranteed. All in all, this is the next best thing to professional-quality DTP on the Amiga. A full and detailed manual included.

Description	Price	Order Code
PageSetter 2	**£50**	**PAGE UP**



Spectracolor

Oxxi-Aegis actually produced *Spectracolor* before they made the *Junior* version featured on the Coverdisk of *Amiga Format* 35. It was the first HAM paint program to use full brush animation, in the style of *Deluxe Paint*. Its powerful features make it a must for anyone who wants to do real animation in 4,096 colours, and it also has a number of unique innovations:

Brush Wraps
Advanced PAINT Modes
Air Brush
Brush Animation – including curved path animation with fades and simple morphing.

But this upgrade specially arranged through *Amiga Format* Mail Order doesn't stop there. You'll also receive a program disk, plus a sample tutorial disk and an in-depth 300-page manual that will take you through countless examples and techniques showing you precisely why *Spectracolor* is such an excellent paint-and-animation package.

Description	Price	Order Code
Spectracolor	**£29.99**	**SPECT UP**

CanDo – latest version

If you want to start learning about programming a computer then you can't go far wrong with Innovatronics 'applications generator' *CanDo*. With this package you'll be able to create a variety of applications, from accounts packages to complete multimedia information systems that encapsulate all the elements that have made this subject the talking point that it has become in recent years.

Other programs can also draw upon *CanDo*'s ability to use sampled sounds, IFF images and even animations, and if you have Workbench 2 you can even use *CanDo* to control other applications on even hardware devices using ARexx scripts.

Innovatronics have been listening to requests from the people who used the original version of this powerful multimedia package, and the latest version 1.6 of the full professional *CanDo* program has a number of updates in accordance with their requests. Among these is full support for the gameport device, which means you can even write games with it! The program comes with a full and detailed manual, which could make all the difference for aspiring *CanDo* programmers.

Description	Price	Order Code
CANDO	**£89.95**	**CANUP**



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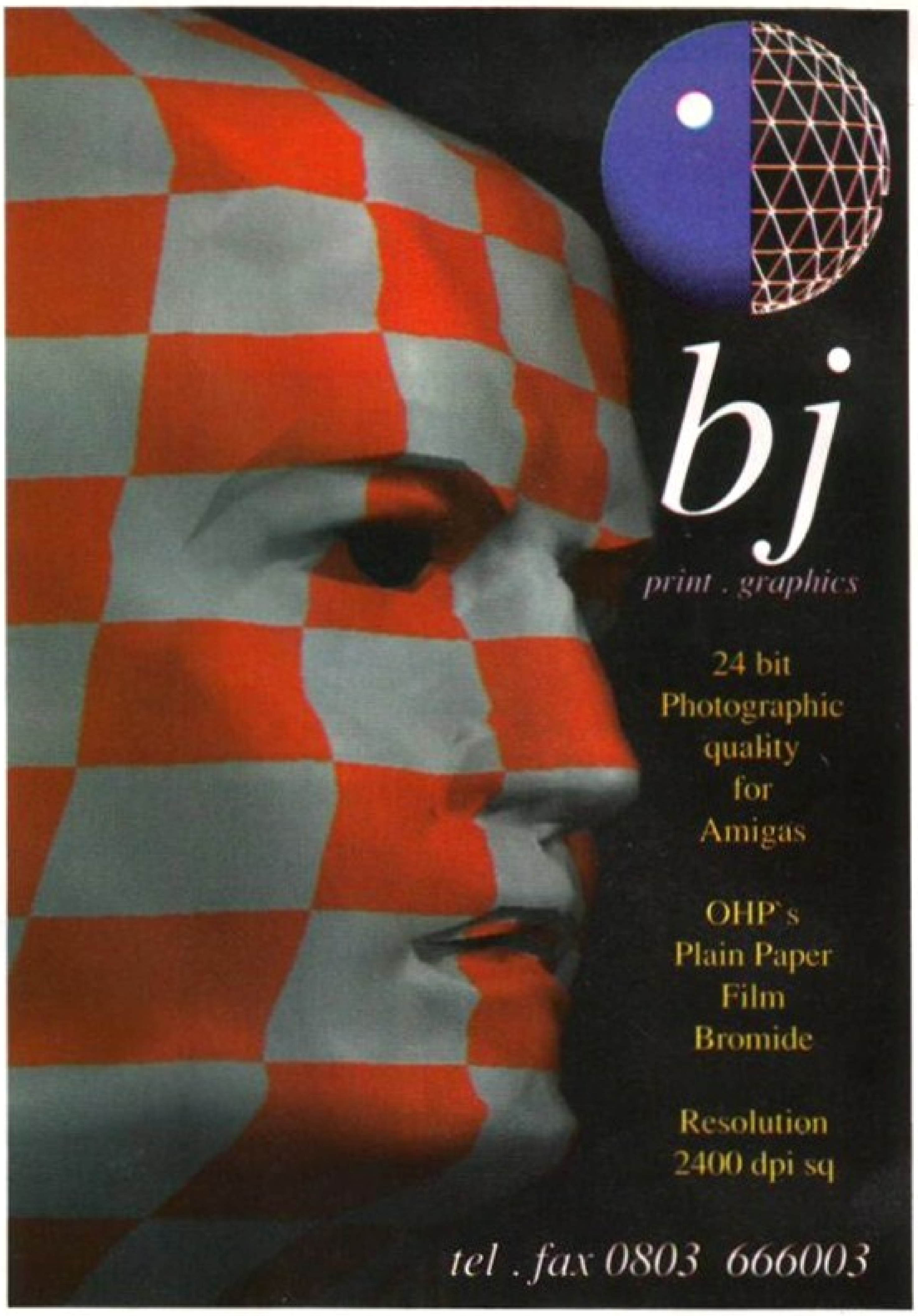
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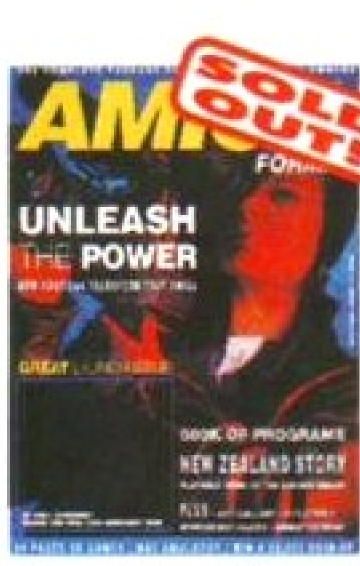
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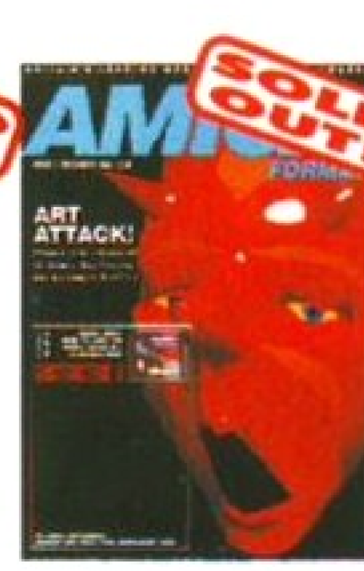
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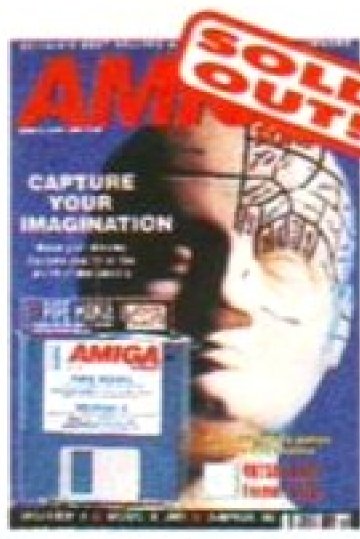
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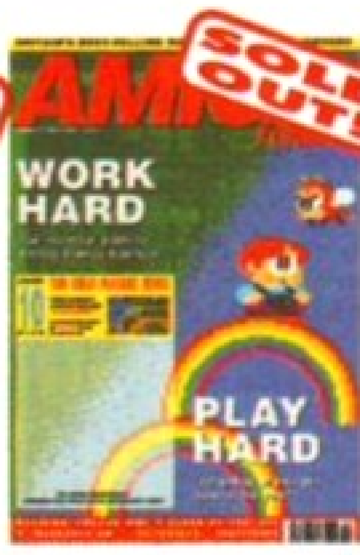
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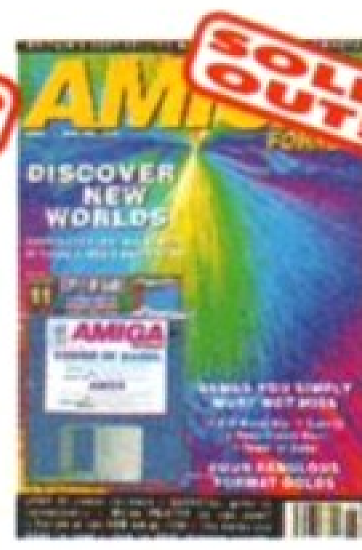
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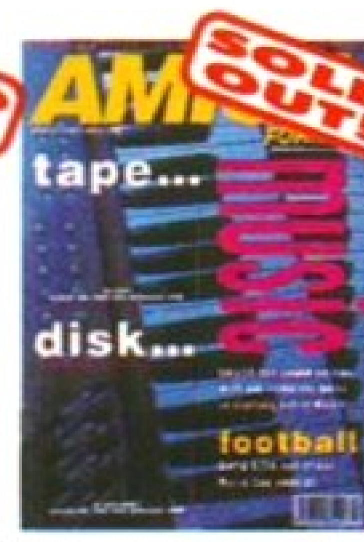
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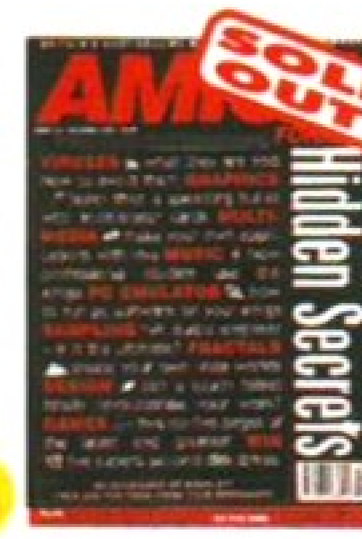
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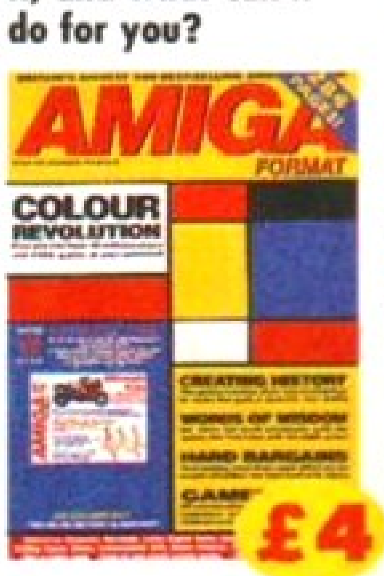
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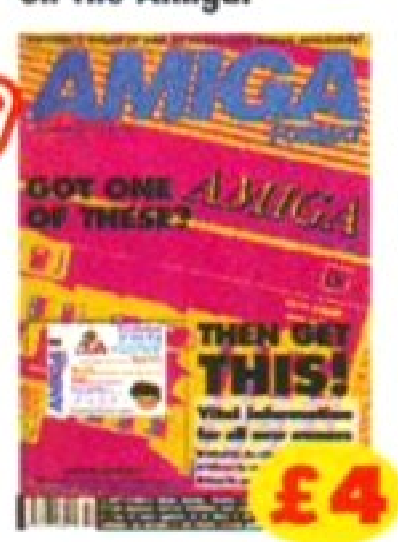
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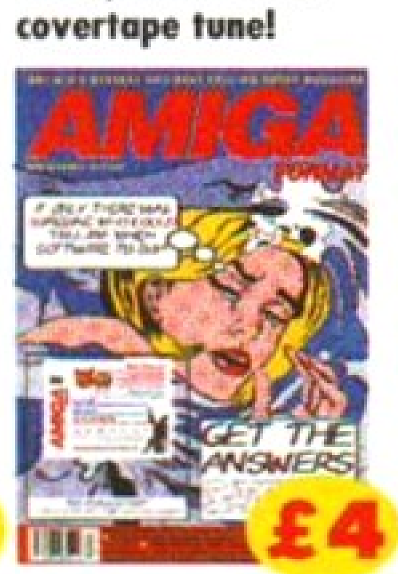
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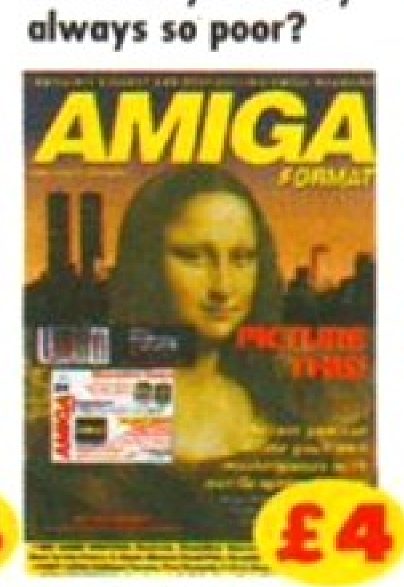
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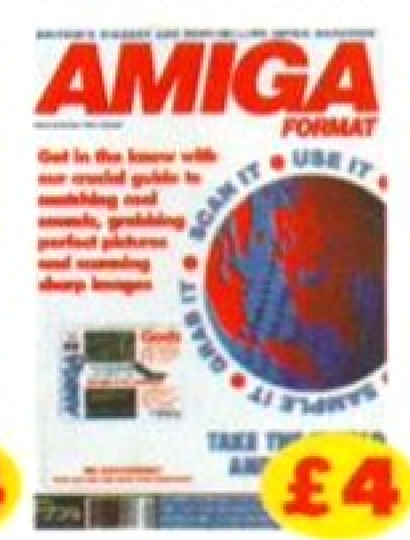
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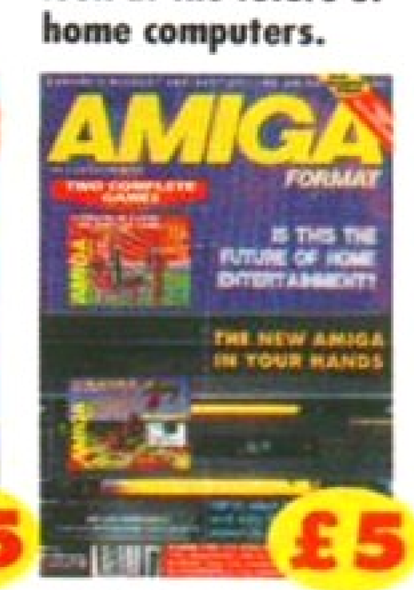
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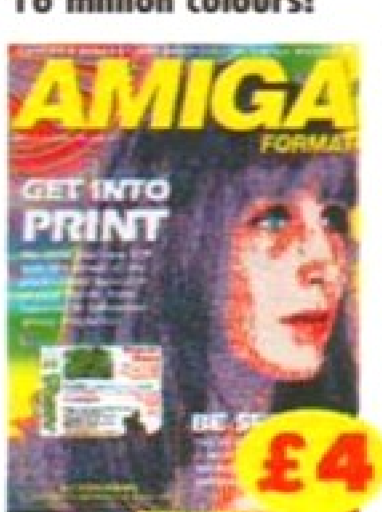
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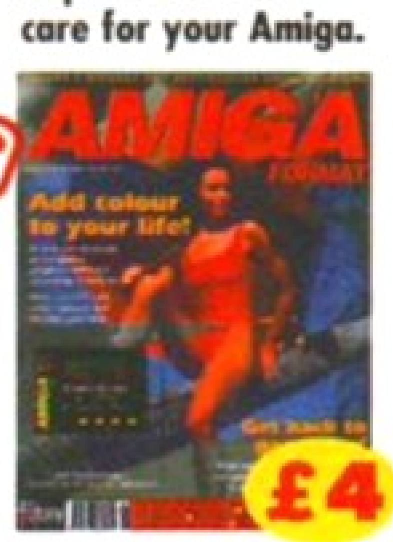
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True Colour brings 16 million colours to your screen.



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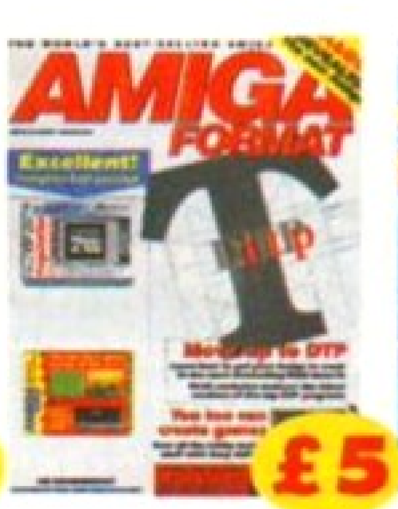
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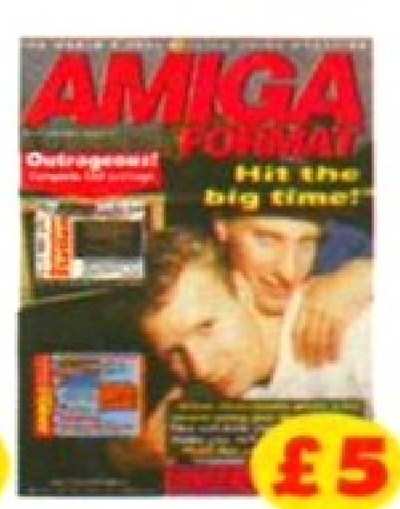
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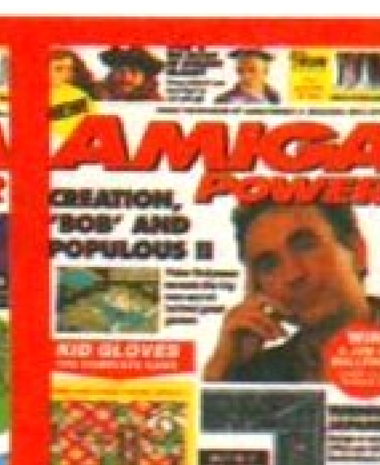
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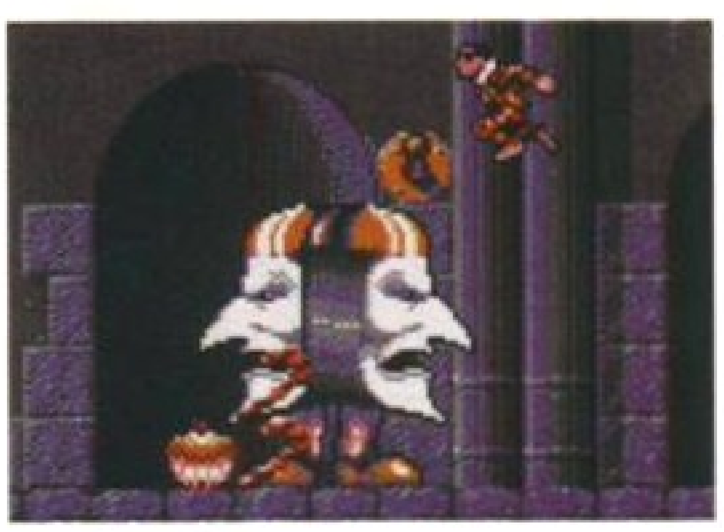


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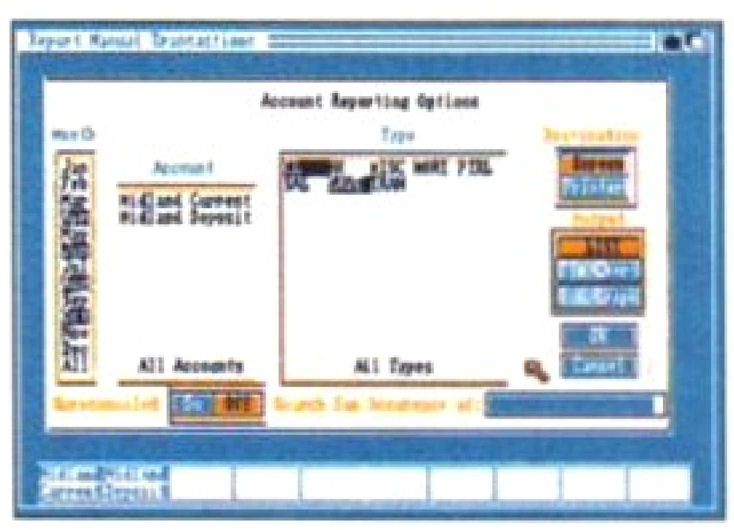
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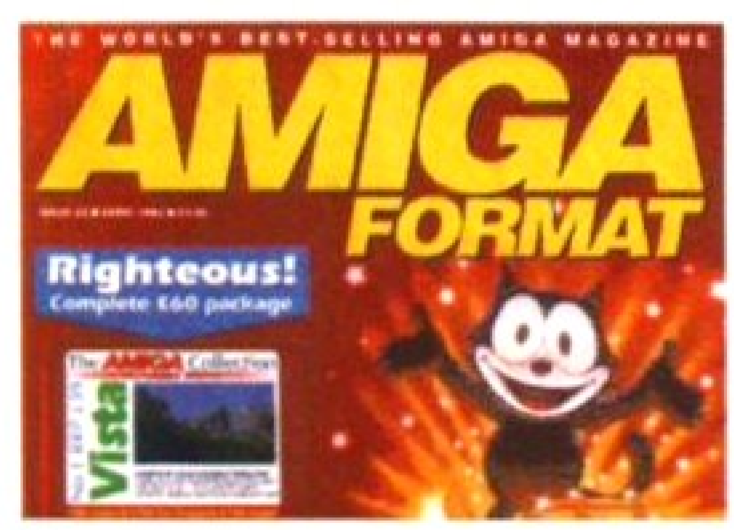
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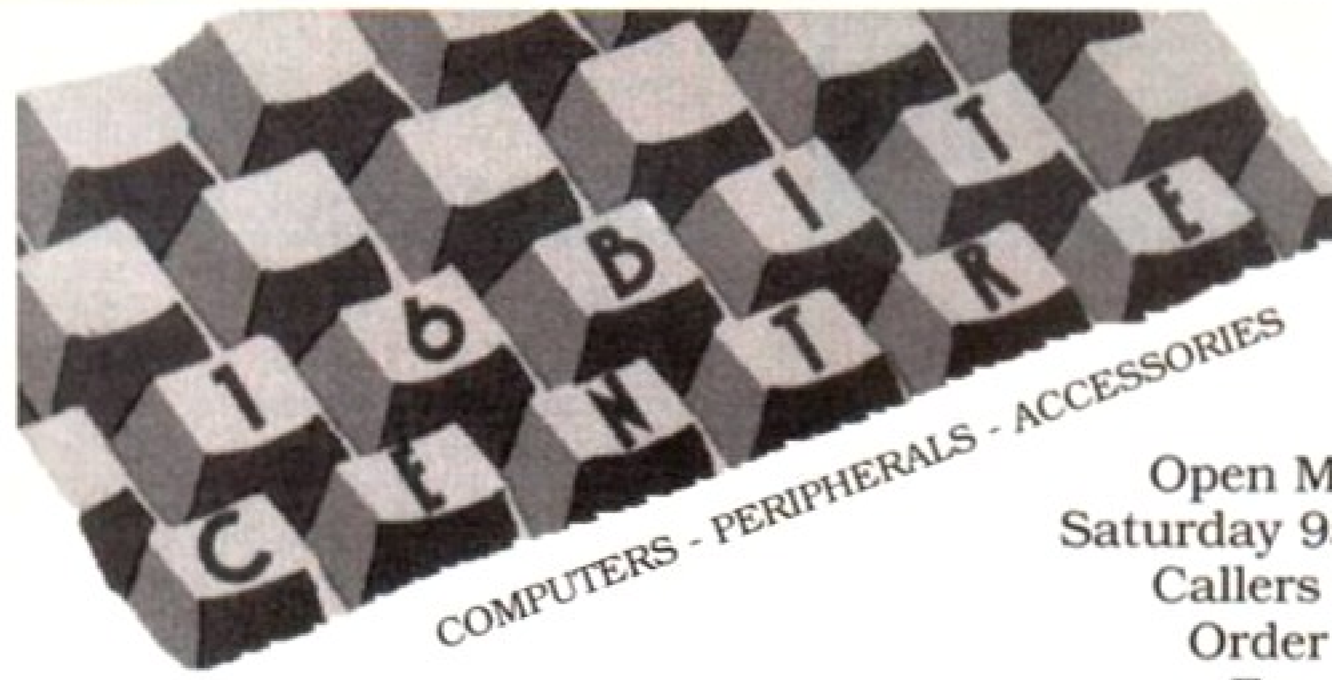
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Workbench

Handy hints, technical tips, contentious issues and a whole bundle of information, finely sauteed by **Pat McDonald**.

AUTHOR WRITES

FROM: PERRY HAYNES, IRTHLINGBOROUGH

I plan to use my Amiga to write a book. To do this I'm going to need a word processor of some kind. Can you tell me which would be the best for the job, and, if as I suspect the best is expensive, what is a good cheap alternative?

I assume that you are planning to just write the words, and have no intention of designing the actual pages on your Amiga. If I were to write a book, my first choice would be *Protext* from Arnor, simply because it's very fast. All of the other word processors have functions to control layout and include pictures, but *Protext* is the best for pure input of words. At £150 for the very latest version, it is expensive. *Protext* 4.3 is nearly as good, but costs more like £70. Both come with a British spelling checker.

My second question is about faulty Coverdisks. Now, I realise that if I send them back within a month of the cover date, all is well. But I started buying the magazine six months before I got an Amiga, and I am only now finding some of them don't work. Do you make allowances for circumstances like these? What about the people who order back issues and find that the Coverdisks then don't work?

If you send them direct to the Monmouth Street office, addressed to Clare Hodgson, she will endeavour to sort out the situation. Please understand that this is not her main task on the magazine, and so no guarantee of when a replacement is sent back can be given. Also, the replacements lack labels because these are produced by a duplicating company and only a set number of them are printed.

Finally, I ended up buying one of the last A500s (1.3 type) as it was £100 cheaper than an A500 Plus or A600. The funny thing is that it has the same keyboard as a Plus – two extra keys. Is it just cosmetic, to allow for easier upgrading to the Plus standard? Or is it really a Plus in disguise? My guess is that the former is true, but it would be nice to be proved wrong in this instance.



This is the old style V4.3 of *Protext*, but nonetheless it is still up to the task of book authorship. Version 5 also has a Thesaurus when you need just the right word.

No, it's purely cosmetic, and inside the machine you'll find a Kickstart 1.3 ROM, an 8372A Agnus and an old style Denise. A far cry from a Plus. Still, you've got a natty keyboard.

RAINBOW POINTERS

FROM: MARK SMIDDY, CLEVELAND

If you've got Workbench 2 and you want your mouse pointer to have 16 colours then here's what you have to do. This is a bit wild, and terse, but believe me it does work!

1) Use any old paint package that can do 16-colour IFF brushes, and start off with a low-resolution screen with that many colours.

2) Draw your pointer design. It should be at most 16 pixels wide, and 125 pixels high.

3) Cut out the design as a brush.

4) Place the handle in the top-left corner.

5) Save the brush as RAM:ENV/SYS/POINTER.ILBM. IPrefs will complain a bit. Don't worry. The new pointer will appear at this stage.

6) To make the change permanent, save the brush to SYS:PREFS/ENV-ARCHIVE/SYS/POINTER.ILBM

This doesn't work with anim brushes, but it should work with all paint programs, provided they support 16-colour IFF brush protocols.

Thanks very much for that one Mark. Not a lot of use, but I guess some people have the time to spend whole days redesigning their Workbench to be as pretty as possible. Next please!

PAINTED KEYBOARDS

FROM: BARRY K HAMMOND, NORTHOLT

£50

Last week my ESC key, all the function keys plus some others stopped working. When I stripped down the keyboard I found that the keyboard membrane (the bit that bounces up and down) had a break on one track.

While phoning round the shops I found that nobody sold just a membrane. I could buy a complete keyboard though – the average price was around £75. I also discovered that there are a lot of Amiga owners who have this trouble.

I didn't want to pay that kind of money, so I tried to fix it myself. I went to my local Halfords and purchased a bottle of electrical conducing paint. It's used in the car trade to repair heated rear windows, and the brand I used was called 'Electrocure' by Comma.

I bent the membrane very, very slightly and put a drip at the crack to make a contact. 25 minutes later I put on a second coat. I touched up all the cracks and waited for a couple of hours before putting the keyboard back together.

The keyboard now works perfectly well again. This trick should also work if any membrane tracks are rusty or corroded – just scrape the track very gently until you can see the conductor, then paint along it. The bottle of paint cost me £7.99 so I saved myself around 68 quid! And there's enough left to do maybe 25-30 repairs.



Amiga keyboards aren't infallible, but Barry Hammond has a top tip for repairing their membranes.

This trick is as old as electro-conductive paint, but I still reckon it's worth a £50 mail order voucher.

KICKSTART 2, PLEASE

FROM: FS CR WILKINSON, RAF HONINGTON

I don't know if anyone else has an A2000HD or not. Am I alone? I doubt it, but it would seem so. I can't find anything about upgrading the A2000 to Workbench 2, Kickstart 2 and all the other Enhanced Chip Set that make the Amiga an even better machine.

Your advice on page 212 of *Amiga Format* Issue 31 was of some help, with its info on the chips and *SysInfo* prog which let me know what I've got to start with. But how to upgrade is a mystery to me. Will a ROM sharer work, and if so how do I go about upgrading?

Yes, a ROM sharer will work on an A2000. In fact, the only Amigas that they don't work with are the original A1000 or the A3000, which stores different Kickstarts on its hard disk. You can do this on any Amiga with a hard disk by using a PD program called *ZKick*, although I wouldn't advocate this except to real hard-case specialists. Especially because it takes up RAM.

Your best bet is to get hold of the official Commodore upgrade. Fitting the new Kickstart ROM is not too difficult a job, and all A2000s can have it without modification. Just take out the old and put in the new, or take out the old, plug it into a ROM sharer alongside the new and put the sharer into the socket.

Also, if I do/can upgrade, will this be compatible with a PC bridgeboard? Do I have to reformat my hard disks and lose all the programs that are Workbench 1.3 compatible? Could I have both versions of Workbench set up on the same hard disk?

Hmm, this is a good deal trickier. You will need a new version of the Janus Bridgeboard software – I've seen it so it should be available from dealers as we go to press. What I would do is to get a ROM sharer, and start off by using Workbench 2 from floppy only, keeping 1.3 on your hard drive. You don't have to lose anything from your hard drive – that's what back-up programs like *Quarterback* are for.

Continued overleaf

Having both versions of Workbench on your hard disk is possible, but it would require a fairly good knowledge of the Shell and startup-sequence editing, plus the PD program *MultiStartup* available on *Dr Yes Utils 1* from 17 Bit PD Library. Personally, I wouldn't bother – I'd reserve my hard drive for Workbench 2 (when you're happy with it) and only switch down to 1.3 when it is absolutely necessary.

TYRO QUESTIONS

FROM: PAUL CARVILL, BUXTON

I have recently sold my ST and bought a second-hand 1Mb A500. The Atari served me well but everyone has to eventually improve their system. I have to admit that the graphics are a lot better than I expected, and the sound chip gives excellent noise. However, I also noticed that the Desktop/Workbench had to be loaded from disk, which is a pain on a single disk-drive machine.

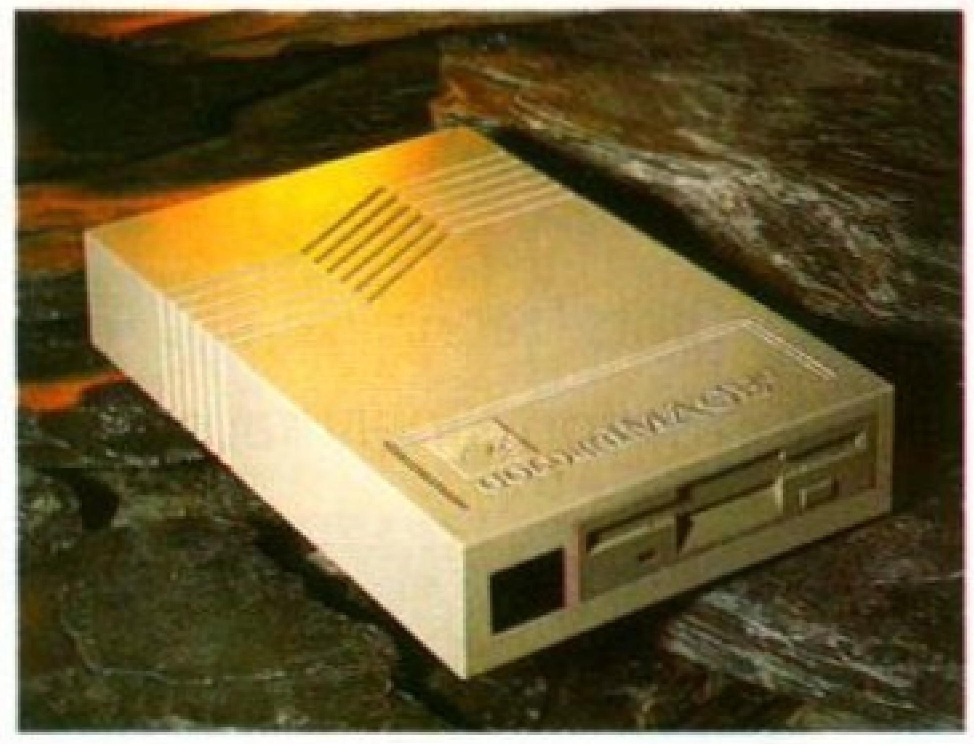
1) If I bought an external disk drive would I need a bigger power supply?

No. All A500 power supplies allow at least one extra drive and 1Mb of memory.

2) Is a hard disk a good investment because I enjoy the odd game but mainly use my Amiga for word processing, desktop publishing and graphics?

A hard drive is always a good investment if you want to save the time normally spent whistling while a floppy loads or saves. It depends on how much you value your time.

3) On my ST I had a high-resolution SM124 monitor. It gave excellent results when I used it for word processing and DTP, but how do I go about getting a similar quality display on my Amiga?



None of these floppy drives will overload the power supply of a 500. But more than one and you could have problems.

What you need to get if you want a stable, high-resolution display is a flicker fixer. The only one available for the A500 is the ICD Flicker Free Video. This provides both horizontal and vertical synchronisation signals used by more expensive, 'multisync' monitors, as well as the analogue red, green and blue signals (hence the term RGB monitor). Check out the monitor roundup on pages 118-126 – you do at least have a choice of a viewing system.

4) Could you tell me if there's a hard drive with built-in memory expansion available?

GVP, Supra, Rochard, Protar, Ashcom, CBM A590 - most of them actually. The official A590 is the best budget buy, but it's comparatively slow, it only gives 2Mb of RAM and 20 Mb of storage space. The GVP is at the other end of the scale – it's faster, has more expansion potential (8Mb and a PC emulator) and better software, but it costs a lot more too.

5) Could you explain what the difference is between chip memory and fast RAM?

Chip memory is accessible to all of the chips that are in the Amiga – not just the processor, but the custom chips too. These are: Agnus chip (graphics, blitter and copper); the Paula chip (sounds and disk drives); and Denise chip (video display, sprites and mouse movement).

All graphics and sounds have to be in chip memory, otherwise they cannot be displayed or played. Programs can also be stored in chip memory, but if so they are subject to being frozen from time to time while the custom chips strut their funky stuff.

Fast memory is only accessible by the processor, and so is never interrupted by the custom chips. It is the best place to run programs from. Some programs (typically older animation programs) insist on some fast RAM in order to work at all. However, because the A500 Plus and now the A600 have no fast RAM, this practise looks like dying out.

6) What happened to Kajagoogoo?

I presume they got filthy rich.

7) Are there any books for the absolute beginner? If so how much and how do you rate them?

Get the Most Out of Your Amiga 1992, by Phil South (see page 196), is good for understanding the potential of the machine. It's not perfect (the type in tutorial listings have aged somewhat) but it will illuminate you as to what you can do with your machine.

VISTA MANIA

FROM: MARK TIMMS, FREELAND

Recently I started playing around with *Vista* from Coverdisk 33. I'm really in to it now, I've got the manual and I am even thinking about buying *VistaPro 2* and possibly an accelerator board.

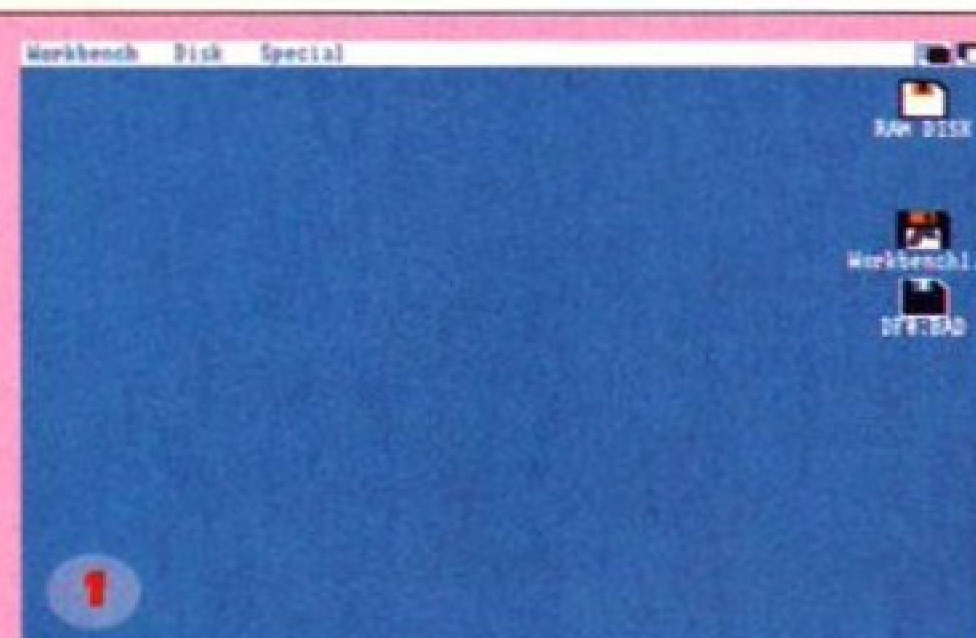
The trouble is that I'm OK at using the program, but the technical side of it totally misses me. I've just created an amazing landscape with rivers, lakes, waves, stars, the works. After waiting 45 minutes for it to render and spending another 15 admiring it, I tried to save it using the 'Save IFF' menu option, but all I got was a message telling me that *Vista* is full!

So could you tell me what files I can delete without butchering the program! It's so frustrating to do all that work, only to be stumped by a little thing like that.

No I won't. Instead, I'll show you how to save a picture onto a separate, blank disk. Get a large stack of new floppies, the more the merrier. Sit down for a couple of hours and format the lot of them, ready for use on your Amiga. It's a tedious activity, but someone's got to do it.

In the long run you will save sweat, blood, tears and all the bad vibes that go with needing a blank disk but not having one handy. If you've ever been forced to abandon a document, picture, animation or game-save position, you'll know what I mean.

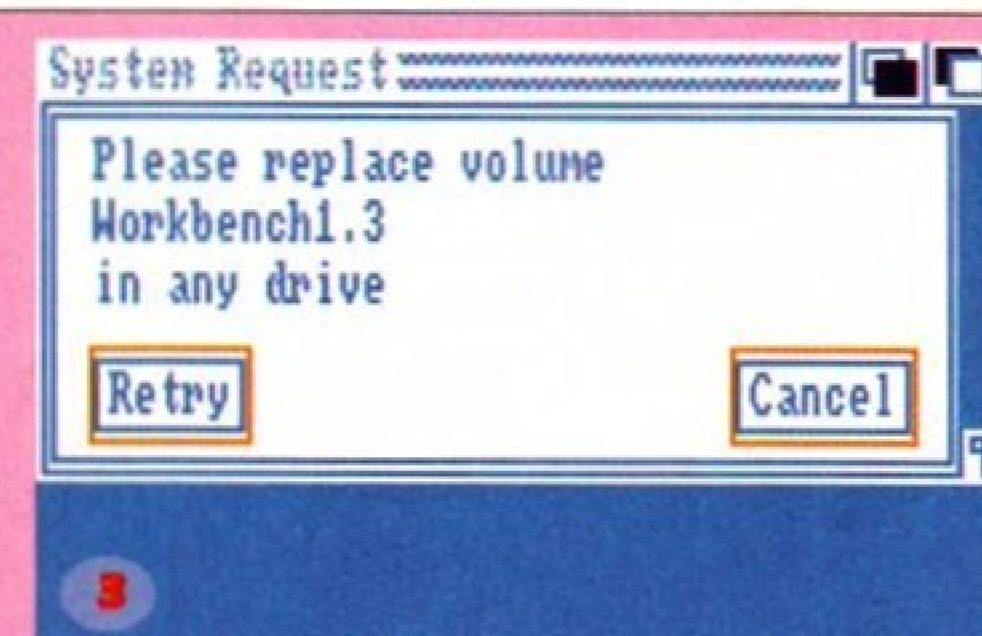
Don't know how to format a blank disk? OK, I'll show you how. First, load up Workbench. Got that stack of disks handy? Good.



Once Workbench has loaded put a blank disk in the drive. It will whirr and an icon will show up saying 'DF0:BAD'. Click once on it with the left button. It will then be highlighted. Press and hold down the right mouse button. A set of menus will appear across the top of the screen.



Keep that right button down! Move the pointer up and to the left. For Workbench 1.3, you want to move to the Special menu, highlight 'Initialize' and then let go. For Workbench 2, move the pointer to the Icons menu, highlight 'Format Disk' and let go.



A box will appear, asking you to put the Workbench disk back in because the program for formatting blank disks is kept on Workbench, not inside the machine. Check the write protect on the Workbench disk – if you can see through the hole in the disk, it is safe and protected.



After the format program has been read in, the computer will ask you to put the blank back in. Do so, making sure that you cannot see through the hole in the corner – otherwise it is safe and cannot be written on. Which means it can't be formatted. Which is not what you want!

A more in-depth (and more expensive) book is *Mastering Amiga Beginners* by Phil South. It costs £19.95 and has an ISBN of 1-87338-03-5 and is available from Bruce Smith Books (0923 894355). Although not as easy to get to grips with, it's much more of a hands on tutorial to master some of the fundamental Amiga skills

NO FUTURE?

FROM: DAVID LAWRENSON, CIRENCESTER
Six months ago I bought an A500 Plus and I have had a lot of enjoyment from it. Now I hear that Commodore have released the A600. I do have the money to get one, but is it worth it? I have over 30 games now, and I would like to know whether they will load on the A600? What I'm really worried about though, is that if I keep hold of my Plus will I still be able to get software for it in the future?

Well, if you have a Plus then there's no point in getting an A600, as they are basically the same machine in two different shapes. The advantage of the Plus (and earlier A500s) is that you can get monster expansions for them. The only advantage of an A600 is that it's very cheap to fit a hard drive to them.

Will you be able to get software for it? Programmers aren't stupid. Most Amigas out there in the UK and across Europe are A500s or Pluses. You don't seriously think they're going to write programs exclusively for the A600 do you? Sure, there will be smart card releases, but there will always be floppy based software from somebody, because it's so cheap to manufacture. At least for this decade.

I am also thinking about getting a freezer cartridge. What is the cheapest, best buy?

Continued overleaf



The machine will check with you that you really do want to format the disk. Click on 'Continue' to proceed, and the disk will be formatted. Once it has finished, be ready with the next blank until your whole stack is formatted.



Here we are in *Vista*. The 'Save IFF' option has just been chosen. At this point, take out the *Vista* disk, put in one of your blanks and click on the "DF0:" gadget. Then enter a file name as normal, and your picture will be saved to the blank, safe until you want it again.

Techno Babble

Do you know how to talk techie speak? Well if you don't then this little bit of jargon busting should sort you out!

Accelerator: hardware expansion that gives your Amiga a faster CPU. Often used with maths-intensive software where a standard processor is too slow, for programs called 'ray tracers' which literally trace the rays of light which bounce around a scene to produce a picture. Also used to considerably speed up flight and other kinds of simulations.

Anim Brush: a brush is a small section of a graphic screen, cut out with a paint program like *Deluxe Paint*. Anim brushes are different small images with the same dimensions – for instance, a bird flapping its wings or an eye blinking.

Blitter: Block Image Transfer device. Used for copying large areas of computer memory from A to B, or to combine different areas into one single image. Widely used to generate large graphic shapes in computer games.

Bridgeboard: Commodore's own IBM emulating device, featuring a complete PC computer on a single card. Only fits A1500 and above machines – allows use of standard PC cards.

Chip RAM: memory accessible by the custom chips (Paula, Agnus, Denise) as well as the processor. Used to store all graphics and sounds. Can be used by programs too – with speed slow downs.

CLI: Command Line Interface. The program which lets you type commands into AmigaDOS for standard operations like copying files or getting a directory. Shell is more commonly used now.

Copper: Co-processor. Used to generate subtly coloured backgrounds – this device built into the Agnus chip can alter colours while the screen is being generated. Executes instructions at the same time as the processor.

CPU: Central Processing Unit. The decision-making chip, the one that tells everything else what to do. It can be interrupted by custom hardware if its programs are in chip RAM.

Fast RAM: memory that's only accessible by the processor. Programs stored here run faster than those in chip RAM – hence the name.

Frame grabber: device for capturing live video data and converting it into computer picture data. Doesn't require a still video signal. Usually gives much better results than a video digitiser, which does the same job, except that the video must be paused.

Freezer cartridge: quasi legal device for examining programs while they are running. Usually with many useful built-in utilities which help overshadow the devices' dubious origins.

Hard drive: basically a big disk for keeping Workbench and all the serious software that you use. Works much faster than a floppy disk. More and more games are becoming installable on to a hard drive.

IFF: Interchange File Format. A standard way of storing pictures and sounds, invented by Electronic Arts and adopted by Commodore. A single standard – practically all art programs can load and save pictures in this form.

Kickstart: the name of the set of programs which are run when the Amiga is turned on. Also contains many library functions for use by programmers. Latest release is Kickstart 2.04. Other releases; 1.3, 1.2, 1.1.

PD: Public Domain. Literally, software that is the property of everybody. PD disks can be freely copied by anyone and you can also distribute them to whoever you want. The correct term is 'Freeware'. 'Shareware' (try before you buy) and 'Licenseware' (commercial and non-distributable) also come under the same rough heading.

ROM: Read Only Memory. Memory that cannot be altered. Widely used as the starting programs for computer systems that have just been turned on – they remember things permanently.

RAM: Random Access Memory. Memory that can be altered and realtered many times. Typically, it does not remember what it contains when the computer's power is switched off.

Scanner: hardware device for reading flat pictures from posters, newspapers and so on, and converting them into computer graphics. Often used in desktop publishing, to read in previously published images.

Script file: a set of commands which you would otherwise have to type into the CLI or Shell by hand. Saved as a text file. Learning how to use Shell or the CLI involves learning how to write script files.

Shell: more up-to-date version of CLI. Works in exactly the same way, but allows some flexibility in what commands are called via the 'alias' function. Also gives some hot key combinations to allow some editing of previously entered commands.

Sound Sampler: hardware device that converts electrical music signals (typically from a tape or CD player) into computer sound. Can also be used with a microphone to capture live sounds.

Sprite: a graphic object that is independent of the screen. On the Amiga, sprites are limited in size and colours. Typically used for mouse pointers, alien missiles, and so on.

Startup-sequence: the name of the script file, contained in the S directory, which is executed after a disk has booted. Typically contains just the name of a program to auto run, but can be very complicated. Whatever the nature of the file, it must always be called Startup-sequence and live in the S directory.

Workbench: the set of programs which sets up a graphical 'point-and-click' interface on the Amiga. Much more friendly than the CLI or Shell, but not as flexible. Always has to be loaded from disk, which is slow but does allow much customisation. Workbench 2 requires a Kickstart 2 ROM. Workbench 1.3 requires a 1.3 ROM, 1.2 needs a 1.2 ROM and so on.

Zorro: this the generic name for the Amiga's expansion connector. The A500, A500 Plus and A1000 had the original Zorro 1; the A1500s and the 2000s have Zorro II; and the A3000 has Zorro III. They are not compatible, hence the different expansions for different machines. The new A600 has a PC MCIA connector instead.

Turn to page 152 for the latest review of the Datel Action Replay III Cartridge, plus we should have the Power Computing cartridge up for review next month.

DISKS NOT DUFF

FROM: MARK PETTIT, BOLTON

Why is it that there are such great variations in the prices of blank disks? If you look through all the adverts in a typical edition of *Amiga Format*, you come across adverts for branded and unbranded disks. For example, in Issue 36, adverts state things like 'these disks are based on a <55% clipping level'. What does it all mean? Do companies expect people to buy their products when they don't even explain what they're selling?

Clip level is a rough approximation of how well a disk remembers data – how long it stays magnetic. The lower the value, the better the disk. The reason why disk prices vary so much is due to how many the advertiser buys at any one time from their supplier. The more they buy, the lower the price, which is then passed on to you.

Don't let it faze you. The process by which branded and unbranded disks are made is exactly the same. The difference is in how well the disks are sorted – what sort of quality control the brandee uses. Personally I prefer TDK, Maxell or 3M disks, because I have never had one that has developed a read/write error.

But it does happen to the best of them, eventually. Magnetic floppy disks are just as susceptible to the effects of time, if not more so, as magnetic tape used for music. Hence the importance of backing up disks.

TEACH QUESTIONS

FROM: RICHARD BINGHAM, LEICESTER

Our school has invested quite a fair amount of money into Amiga technology, based around both the A500 and A500 Plus. The initiative arose because so many of the children had Amigas at home but only really used them for games, and so were unaware of its graphics and word processing capabilities. Once we installed Amigas at school and set some classes up, the children started to use the Amiga far more productively (to the delight of many parents). However there are still a few questions I would like to ask:

Since the arrival of the A600 should we be advising our children to continue buying the A500 Plus at a possibly reduced price or should we be advising them to go straight for the A600 at a higher price? This will apply to any new machines we purchase for the school. Will there be any compatibility problems between the two machines?

Well, the A500 Plus is going to get rather scarce soon, so it really doesn't look like your pupils or yourself will have much choice. You are wrong to think of the A600 as more expensive – the RRP is identical. OK, so dealers are hard pressed in these economically dire times, and price cuts abound.

In terms of software, there really isn't a lot of difference. To a disk, the A600 appears to be almost identical to an A500 Plus. The bad point about the A600 is that you can't add that much memory to it or upgrade the processor chip with an accelerator - yet.

We are looking for a relatively simple database program which will store information about the progress of children over a four-year technology course. The program must be user-friendly and reasonably fast in recording and retrieving information. Print outs are essential. Any suggestions?

The AMOS *Database* program itself should serve you very well. It costs £3.50 and is available from Deja Vu on 0942 495261.

Could you recommend any PD font disks that would appeal to children of 10-14 years?

I regret not, although if you contact any of the PD libraries advertising in the magazine they can sometimes forward example print outs of the contents of font disks, so that you can see what you are getting.

NO CHANCE MATEY

FROM: STEPHEN CREEK, AYLESBURY

In the Letters section of *Amiga Format* Issue 36, you mentioned that a third-party manufacturer was working on an adaptor that plugs into the A500 edge connector. This expansion then permits the use of A600 smart-card software.

Does this mean that the reverse is also possible, and an adaptor for the A600 could be made so that all A500 peripherals (hard drives, memory expansions, Action Replay and so on) could be plugged into an A600?

No I'm afraid this is not possible. To put matters simply, the PC MCIA connector of the A600 lacks a lot of the signals present on the edge connector of an A500 or A500 Plus. You cannot rewire what isn't there!

Also while on the subject, I wouldn't hold your breath for a smart-card adaptor for the A500. I doubt if it will appear before smart cards do, and smart-card software could in fact be years away. Remember, we're not talking about software houses slinging old product onto a ROM chip. There's a considerable amount of work to be done on smart cards before people cotton on to the advantages.

SPACED OUT

FROM: STEINAR THORSEN, NORWAY

I bought my A500 one year ago. I am a student, but I have managed to get enough cash to upgrade my beloved A500 several times. Here's a list of what I've got: 512K expansion in trapdoor, 2Mb fast RAM expansion (Supra500RX), 52 Mb Quantum hard drive (fitted internally via ICD AdIDE connector), two external floppy drives, MPS 1250 printer, Datel Sample Studio (which I hardly ever use).

Now I worry quite a bit about my Amiga, because it gets very hot very fast. It's jammed full of goodies and so the air cannot circulate. I thought of buying a Bodega Bay, it sounds ideal for my purpose. It has a cooling fan and a built-in chunky power supply.

The Bodega Bay also has four A2000-type expansion slots. I don't know if I need them just yet, but I plan to get an accelerator card in the future, so I might do.

Trouble is, I can't fit an A500 accelerator because there isn't space for one. As it is I had to remove the metal shielding (after consultation with CBM).

I'm sorry to bother you with these questions, but I could not get any answers from four different dealers. I don't understand it, I sell PCs and accessories and I am very happy when somebody comes to me in need of help…

Now to my questions!

1) Can I fit the Supra500RX into a Bodega Bay, or do I have to throw it away (not that I would).

No, it won't fit in an A2000 expansion slot. However, you could resell it and buy an A2000 RAM expansion. The point here is that A2000 RAM expansions cost less than equivalent A500 types. The reason is that A2000 expansions have no case or power connectors, and are just bare cards.

2) I have a half-height floppy disk drive and a 1011 drive. Could they both go into the Bodega Bay or would the 1011 have to stay outside?

They would probably both be all right on the inside, although I would personally keep one on the outside. If you need to have just one disk drive available (there is the odd piece of software that only works with one drive) then you'll be reaching for your screwdriver in no time.

3) Will I be able to fit A2000 accelerator cards to a Bodega Bay or not?

NO. A2000s have five different kinds of expansion slot: two bridgeboard slots; two PC slots for use with a Bridgeboard; five Zorro II slots (this is the type that Bodega Bay is equipped with); one processor slot for accelerator cards; and one video slot for flicker fixers, genlocks or a Video Toaster.

What I would do if I were in your situation is get the Bodega Bay, back-up your hard drive and sell it and the SupraRAM. Then get a hard drive with memory expansion built in, and put your back-up on to that. The GVP Series II will serve you very well, believe me; my A2000 hasn't been without one since the day it arrived for review.

That frees up the CPU socket, which your hard-drive controller is occupying at the moment. Then you can fit an A500 accelerator card, if and when you decide to buy one. Plus you've got three more sockets for things like the *VLab* frame grabber, serial boards, network controllers or whatever else you want to expand your system with.

4) How about my sound sampler? Would it be possible to buy a standard parallel-port sound sampler and use that instead?

You can take the Datel sound sampler apart, and fit it into a Zorro II slot. No problem. The parrallel port should be fine for fitting one of the more common samplers like *Technosound Turbo* – Bodega Bay doesn't affect this part of your Amiga at all.

5) Am I going to have to import an A1500 from England, as the Norwegian branch of Commodore does not seem to understand that Amiga owners are not just little children who simply want to play computer games all day?

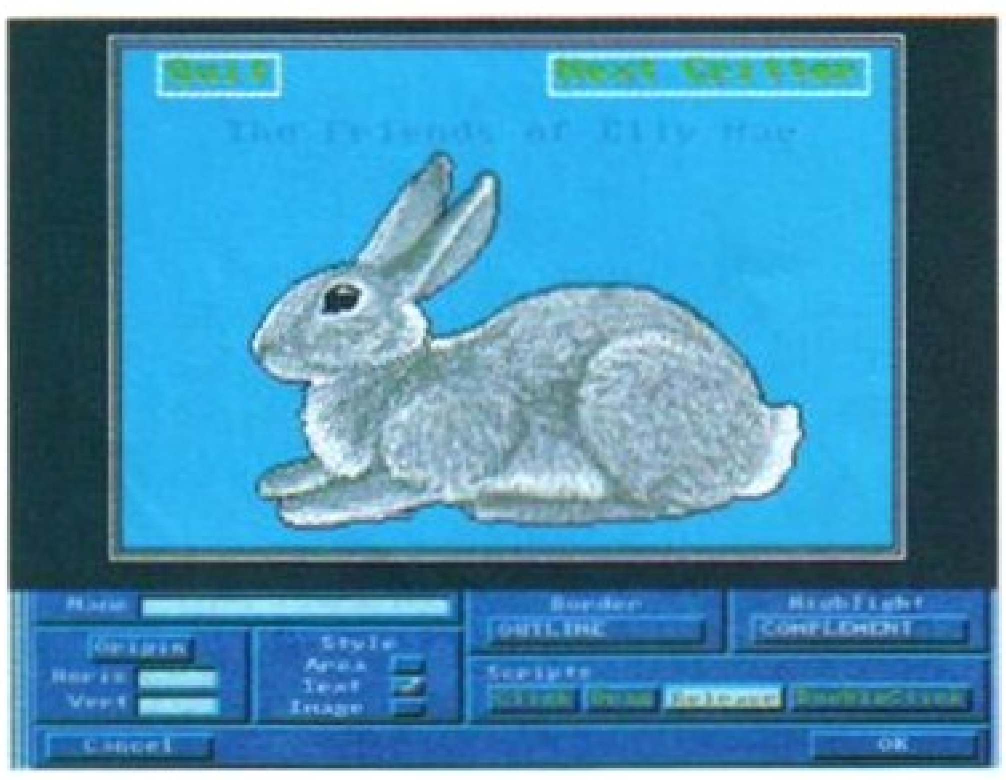
You don't have to, but that is another alternative. Personally I'd stick with the A500 – if your Bodega Bay packs up, you've got a back-up system.

Get the most out of the Amiga Format Collection

Superb, complete full-price programs for practically nothing isn't the whole story of the **Amiga Format** Collection. You also have the chance to upgrade to new versions of the Collection programs at special prices. Here are the options on offer...

Please note: you do not have to return your *Amiga Format* Collection Coverdisk to take advantage of any of these upgrade offers.

CANDO! – LATEST VERSION



Innovatronics have been listening to requests from people who used the original version of this powerful multimedia package, and the latest version 1.6 of the full professional CanDo! program has a number of updates in accordance with their requests. Among these is full support for the gameport device, which means you can even write games with it! The program comes with a full and detailed manual, which could make all the difference for aspiring CanDo! programmers.

Description	Price	Order No
CanDo!	£89.95	CANUP

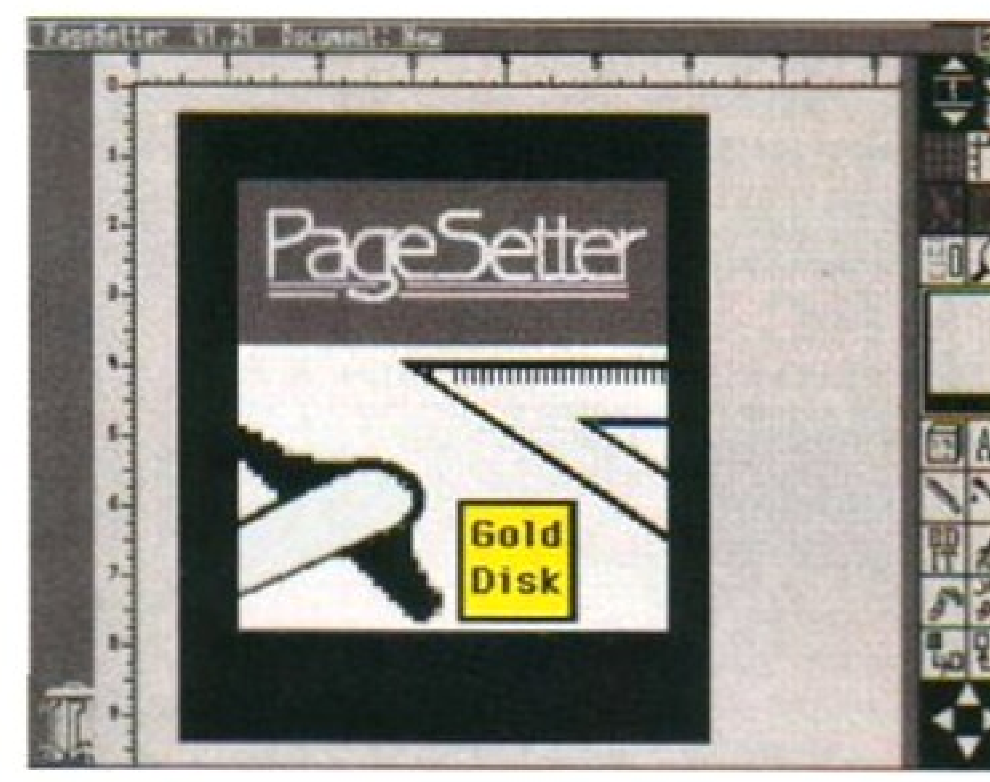
SPECTRACOLOR



Oxxi-Aegis actually produced Spectracolor before they made the junior version featured on the Collection Coverdisk. It was the first HAM paint program to use full brush animation, in the style of Deluxe Paint. Its powerful features make it a must for anyone who wants to do real animation in 4,096 colours, and it also has a number of unique ideas that you can't get in any other paint program. Naturally, it also comes complete with an excellent manual.

Description	Price	Order No
Spectracolor	£29.99	SPECTUP

PAGESETTER 2



Completely rewritten in machine code throughout for extra speed, Gold Disk's updated version of the beginners' layout program takes a different approach from the original. Rather than having separate text editing and picture editing modules, it now lets you edit text on the page. It also uses Compugraphic scalable fonts throughout, so extra quality on printout is guaranteed. All in all, this is the next best thing to professional-quality DTP on the Amiga. Full manual included.

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For overseas orders call Nikki for prices on 0458 74011

BACK ISSUES WITH AMIGA FORMAT COLLECTION COMPLETE PROGRAMS

If you missed out on any of the **Amiga Format** Collection programs, why not buy the magazine as a back issue? Back issues come complete with all the relevant disks. Here's what you get with what...

Issue 33, April 1992
***Amiga Format* Collection disk**
***Vista*, an amazing fractal landscape generator that is both useful and fun**
Price £5 Order number AMF33

Issue 34, May 1992
***Amiga Format* Collection disk**
***PageSetter 1.2*, DTP with word processing and graphics editing**
Price £5 Order number AMF34

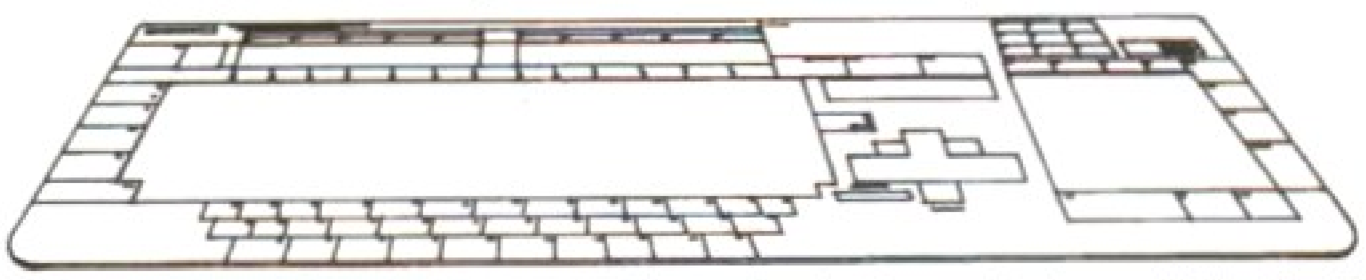
Issue 35, June 1992
***Amiga Format* Collection disk**
***SpectraColor Jr*, a full-featured 4,096-colour HAM paint package**
Price £5 Order number AMF35

Issue 36, July 1992
***Amiga Format* Collection disk**
***CanDo! Junior*, the powerful multimedia programming system**
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AMIGA KEYBOARD OVERLAYS

...now you can write the keyboard commands on the keyboard!

...no more referring to the manual for which key does what



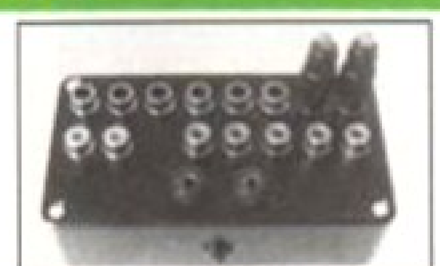
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Answerfile

Another roundup of quickfire questions and answers, including a special section on CanDo queries. Chaired by **Pat McDonald**.

Q I have followed your Beginners section with great interest, especially the tutorial on creating a self booting disk (see *Amiga Format* 35). I would prefer though for my disks to end at Workbench, with icons to click on to show various pictures and text files. How do I do this?

A The place to start is with one of our recent Coverdisks. Take a good look at it through Shell or the CLI, especially the startup sequence. Only the commands Setpatch, Binddrivers, Loadwb and Endcli are used, in that order. Naturally all are contained in the C directory, as is *PPMore*, which is used to display text files. In order to use icons on a disk, the Icon.library file will have to be in the Libs drawer.

Once you get to the stage where you can boot up a cut down Workbench from its own disk, then the fun begins. To make a data file (picture or text file) display, you have to have a separate program on the disk to do this – use *Vilbm* pictures and *PPmore* for text.

There are alternative displayer programs available, but these are the ones I use. The *View* program from *Animation Station* can be used to display animations.

To set up the display program with the data file, you have to alter the tool types in the information window of the icon. This is best done by booting with Workbench first, and then using it to alter your stand alone disk. How do you alter the tool types? When Workbench has finished booting, insert your stand alone disk. Double click on its icon, and click once on one of your data icons, to highlight it. Then keep the right mouse button pressed down , and select info (for Workbench 1.3 or earlier) or Information (for Workbench 2) from the menus that are at the top of the Amiga's screen.

The info screen will appear. Click in the window marked tool types, and a little cursor should appear to let you type - if it doesn't click on the Add button first. Then type in the exact path and name of the utility you want to use to show the file. Finally click on Save, and your icon is already to be clicked on!



Most, but not all, samplers include the sampler hardware necessary to sample sound from a microphone or hi-fi.



***Audio Engineer* does not only come with the best software (*Audio Master*) but also this sexy piece of sampling gear.**

Q Can RAM in a hard drive or external memory expansion be configured as chip RAM?

A No. Never. Not at all. Forget it. not in a million years. Get the message?

Q Where can I get *Paint Pot 2* from?

A You can get the full program from Prisma Software, 29 St James' Avenue, Upton Heath, Chester CH2 1NB. Telephone 0244 326244.

Q Do all sound samplers come equipped with sampler hardware?

A Usually. The only ones that don't are *Audio Master* (which is the software from *Audio Engineer*) and *Audition 4*. All the others do come with sampler hardware.

Q Is it possible to join together A500 trapdoor RAM expansions?

A It is possible (the Megaboard from Evesham Micros does this) but I wouldn't advocate it. Judging from the letters from various readers, it doesn't work that well at all. A RAM expansion that plugs into the left-hand side of the machine is much more convenient – just plug in and go, no messing. My favourite is the SupraRAM 500RX.

CanDo Queries



The *CanDo* multimedia program was given away as part of the *Amiga Format* Collection on Issue 36.

I can't seem to de-Mash the *CanDo Jnr* program properly. I keep getting CRC error. Is this a problem with the disk or not?

Usually it is. Most of the disk contains the DMS files (Cando1.DMS and Cando2.DMS). If these contain a read/write error, then the *Disk Masher* program will not be able to unarchive the disk properly, and will simply give a CRC error.

However, the *Disk Masher* program does not work on certain Amigas. People who have had a replacement which still doesn't de-Mash have two options; they can either find someone local to them with a different kind of Amiga, and decrunch the files on that.

Alternatively, send it to: A600 *CanDo* Returns, ***Amiga Format***, 30 Monmouth St, Bath BA1 2BW and we will decrunch it for you. However, this really will take longer so you are much better off getting it done on a friend's Amiga.

I can't get the *CanDo* Jnr program to work at all! All I get is a message saying 'Sorry, this is the PAL version of the software and you have an NTSC machine'. What's going on?

Well, just what it's saying really. That version of *CanDo* is for PAL machines and just won't work on the smaller screen size (but faster) NTSC types. Luckily a PAL version can be converted to an NTSC version by copying a couple of files onto it - these files will be on next month's Coverdisk.

The *CanDo Jnr* demo doesn't seem to load properly. After booting from the *CanDo* disk, it asks for *CanDo Extras*, then *CanDo*, then *CanDo Extras...* It just goes into a loop! What is wrong with it?

Nothing at all. The problem is that the program will do this on Amigas that only have one disk drive. This is because all versions of *CanDo* were designed to work on systems with at least two drives, so disk swapping is inevitable on single-drive systems. It takes 16 swaps to get into the program on a single-drive Amiga.

The *CanDo Jnr* program doesn't seem to work properly. I plough through the tutorial, but when I press the 'Release' gadget, the program just hangs! And I'm left on the work screen (the console area at the bottom is missing) and the mouse pointer has Zs all over it. Is there any way around this, or is it just a bug in the program?

It's a problem which happens on single-drive machines. It happens when the machine needs to ask for a disk swap, and leaves the Control panel behind the main working area. Innovatronics have put in a feature to get around it. Simply press Ctrl and F10 at the same time, and the work area should leap back into view. The mouse pointer may remain 'sleepy' (changed to Zs) but if you click with it it will return to the normal arrow.

I have managed to create a reasonable slideshow with *CanDo Jnr*, but cannot get it to run from a separate disk. It just comes back 'Cannot run Slideshow: error 121". How do I get it to work?

You get error code 121 when you are using a file in the wrong way. If you type the name of a file at the Shell or CLI, then the Amiga expects that file to be a program. A *CanDo* deck is not actually a program – it is a data file, containing the information needed to find the files that the deck uses.

If you want to put a deck onto a separate disk, then the startup sequence of that disk should read:

```
Deckbrowser nameofdeck
```

Q **I can't get *Animation Station* to insert stills into my anims. I click on 'Load ILBM', select the picture and nothing happens!**

A The picture has been loaded into the program's internal buffer. To put it in the animation, simply click on the 'Append to Last' gadget afterwards! It's explained more fully in the Coverdisk pages of last month's *Amiga Format*.

Q **Why won't *RSI Demo Maker* work on a Plus? Is it because the Plus has no fast RAM?**

A Not just that. Because the A500 Plus has extra screen modes (the Enhanced Chip Set) programmers have to be careful when setting up screens and using the blitter, otherwise they confuse the extra circuitry built into later machines. The only way for programmers to know that their software works properly on a certain machine is to test it – and *RSI Demo Maker* was written before the Plus was released.

Incidentally, while I'm on the subject, George Thompson Services have become official distributors of that program. The official, commercial version (I must admit I didn't know it was commercial when I first reviewed it in PD Update) costs £25, which includes a manual on using it. GTS 0707 664654.

Q **Do ROM sharers work with all versions of the Kickstart ROM chip?**

A Yes they do. Kickstart 1.2, 1.3 and 2.04 all work with a ROM sharer.

Q **Is it worth upgrading from *Deluxe Paint III* to *Deluxe Paint IV*?**

A Only if you want to use HAM (4,096 colour) mode. It has to be said that, although *Deluxe Paint IV* is a lot better, there are a couple of things (like stencils) that work better in *Deluxe Paint III*.

Deckbrowser is about 98K in length, so don't make your decks too big. That utility (together with *Deckbinder* and *Deckrunner*) are in the C directory on the CanDo disk. It is wise to copy all three to the C directory of your stand-alone disk.

However, do not think that things are that simple. Once you have the *Deckbrowser* program and your deck autobooting off a disk, they will tell you that more files are needed – mostly libraries from the *CanDo* disk, but also the pictures for your slideshow. Each individual deck will need a slightly different complement of files, but the ones you always need are the Icon.library and Diskfont.library, which should be in the libs drawer of your stand alone disk.

Some *CanDo* decks will also need the Cando. library. It is illegal to distribute this on commercial disks without Innovatronics' consent. However, disks for local or PD use are fine to use this. The only way to find out how to do it is to do it – you'll need to use lots of trial and error but it is possible. The *CanDo Installer* program is useful too, for rerouting paths to picture names – otherwise you have to call your stand-alone *CanDo*, and put all the pictures in a drawer called Images!

I really like *CanDo Jr*, but I am stuck because of lack of documentation. Are you going to be doing a special offer for the manual, as you did for *Vista* and *Page Setter*?

No but you can get the latest version, which is *CanDo* 1.6, from our ***Amiga Format*** Collection Mail Order which can be found on Pages 182 and 183.

In-depth explanation No 6: Amiga memory



Best all-in-one memory expansion (unless you want to treat yourself to a hard drive with one built-in) is the SupraRAM 500RX. It's got a metal case and is very thin so it takes up as little space as possible. It also has an off switch for when you don't need it and is one of the few memory expansions with a through connector which actually works with freezer cartridges like the Action Replay.

This is the column to read if you can't understand the nitty gritty facts about Amiga memory. Here's some of the basics.

1 Computer memory of any sort is best visualised as a series of boxes. Memory is referred to by address – where in the sequence a given box is. As with most computer numbers, the lowest possible address is zero, not one as you might think. The first 2Mb of memory are reserved for chip RAM (although not all Amigas can make use of this). Exactly where fast RAM goes is up to the hardware – but it's usually the next eight megabytes of memory after that.

2 Each individual box is called a byte. Bytes are best thought of as characters of text - so about 2,000 bytes would store the contents of a page of printed text. One byte consists of eight binary digits or 'bits' for short. Each bit can be either on, or off. A byte can store a number between zero and 255.

3 Bytes cannot store large numbers. By using two bytes at a time - 16 bits - a 'word' can be used instead. A word can store a number between zero and 65,535.

4 Even words have their limits, and four bytes (32 bits) make a 'long word'. A long word can store a number between 0 and over 4,000,000,000. There is another term, 'long long word' which is only used with very powerful computers.

5 Memory is measured using two terms; Kilo byte (Kb for short); and megabyte (Mb for short). However, 1Kb is not one thousand bytes long – but 1,024 bytes. Similarly, 1Mb is not one million bytes – but 1,048,576 bytes (1,024 times 1,024). There is a third time, giga byte (Gb) but few Amigas need technical terms like that at the moment – CDs have a capacity of about 0.5Gb.

6 The reason why numbers like 1,024 and 1,048,576 are used is because computers work according to binary maths (base two) rather than the every day base 10 (decimal or denary). Just write the number one down, and keep doubling it (multiplying by two) down the page. Eventually you'll get to those dreadful numbers.

7 The reason why people use terms like K and Mb is because binary numbers are so meaningless to human beings. Of course, K and Mb are just as meaningless in themselves – but most people hate maths more than they do jargon!

8 Remember about addresses being the number of a given box? One way to illustrate what a computer looks like from the inside is a memory map. Take a look at the one in your manual.

9 You know when you get the message 'Software failure' and two long numbers? This is the computer telling you (in its own language, of course) what has gone wrong – the first number tells you what has gone wrong, and the second number tells you at what address in memory. Any time you get a software failure, jot down the numbers, and send them to the programmer, together with an explanation of what you were doing.

10 If you think that 1Mb of memory – one million character's worth – is a lot, you're wrong. One single 4,096 colour image takes up 64K of memory – if it's in interlace (double height vertically and flickery like *IntroCAD*) then it will take up 128K. In overscan (bigger than the visible screen area) then even more memory is gobbled up. One second of sampled sound occupies 32K at the fastest, most accurate rate.

Letters

Hello and welcome once again to the bit of the magazine where you get to have a direct say. And, if we're going to be perfectly honest, I get a good chance to make my opinions known as well. Let's take a look and see what issues you lot have been taking an interest in. But just before we do, remember that if you've got any thoughts, ideas or opinions to offer, the address is Letters, **Amiga Format**, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW. Remember, keep it short!

ART ATTACK

I'd just like to ask you if there will be an artist's page in the near future? Ya know, like a reader's graffiti board? I'm fairly new to your mag, having just got my mitts on an Amiga, and I think it's tops.

PJ Carvill, Buxton

Serendipity is the word. We used to put a reader's pic on the Coverdisk every month, but that seemed a bit selective. We've just decided that as the Letters section is the readers' part of the mag, that we ought to print readers' pics in these pages as a sort of gallery. And it starts below. If you want to see your pictures in print, send them on a disk please to The Gallery, Letters, Amiga Format, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW.

LOVE SHACK

Please could you tell me the connection between American band The B-52s and the Amiga? Also, some while ago someone told me that if you type in words concerning the B-52s on the 'Insert Workbench' screen, you get special messages. Is it true?

Nicholas Death, Bow

The people who designed the Amiga were B-52s fans and in 1985, when the A500 was first made, they etched the words 'Rock Lobster' on the A500 circuit board. That's the name of the B-52's biggest hit. Keeping up with tradition, the A600 circuit board, designed just last year, has the words 'June Bug' etched on - it's the name of a recent B-52s single And in answer to your last question, no.

A600 HARD BARGAIN

I've just bought one of the new Amiga 600HDs, after considering buying an Amiga for some time and having finally decided it was time to take the plunge. The problem is, despite the fact that it claims to be a 1Mb machine it will not run some 1Mb software.

Commodore tell me that this is because the hard drive uses some of the memory. Surely that means it is not a 1Mb machine? I think I have been misled.

John Farnham, Long Ashton

The A600HD does have a 1Mb RAM capacity, but the hard drive, when it is running, uses up a lot of this. So Commodore have not actually been misleading anyone, though it appears they have not thought to explain this problem in advance. Potential buyers of an A600HD should be aware of this.

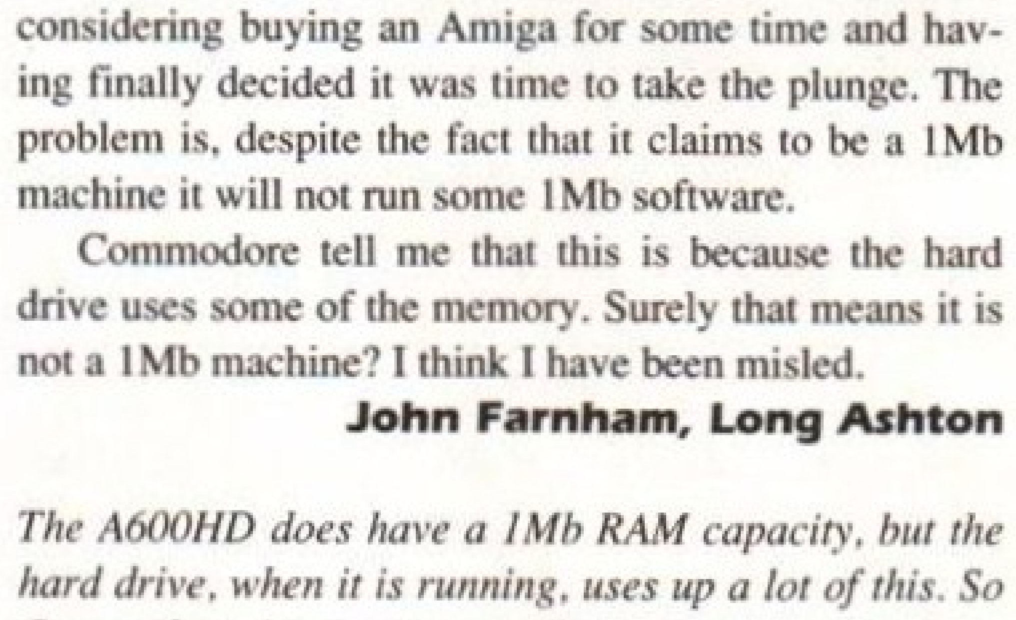
There are ways around the problem. By holding down the mouse buttons when you boot the machine, a boot selector screen can be reached which allows you to turn off the hard drive and play games from floppy. For other programs, having only one partition on your hard drive will mean it uses a minimum of RAM.

But the only practical and permanent solution is to buy a RAM expansion, which inevitably makes the A600HD seem less of a bargain.

Continued overleaf

Vision On

Got a picture you're proud of? Send it in, see it in print and win an ***Amiga Format*** binder! Since Letters is where you get to contribute your words, we thought it would be the perfect place to see your pics on display too. However your image was created, whether you've sketched it in *DPaint* or generated it with a ray-tracing package, we'd like to see it. Only the best will make it into these hallowed pages. Send your entries on disk in IFF format to The Gallery, Letters, ***Amiga Format***, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW.



'Cat Women', by Lee Martin of Bristol.

HOW TO CONTACT AMIGA FORMAT

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WORKBENCH

If you have any problems with the technical side of your Amiga, with hardware or with serious software, Pat McDonald will try to answer you in the mag. Or, if you have any advice for others or any handy tips to share, send it in and you could win a prize.
WORKBENCH, ***AMIGA FORMAT***, 30 MONMOUTH STREET, BATH BA1 2BW

GAMEBUSTERS

If you've just found the cheat mode, mapped out the levels or found all the passwords for the latest game, send the info to Andy and you could win a prize. Or, if you're stuck, ask Helping Hand for advice – or solve someone else's problem and win a prize!
ANDY NUTTALL, GAMEBUSTERS***AMIGA FORMAT***, 30 MONMOUTH STREET, BATH BA1 2BW

LETTERS

The letters pages are there for you to air your views and share your opinions: please remember not to ask questions that should be in Workbench! Damien is looking for thought-provoking or entertaining letters, the shorter the better. Prizes given for the best two.
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR, ***AMIGA FORMAT***, 30 MONMOUTH STREET, BATH BA1 2BW

COMPETITIONS

To enter a competition, write the answers and your name, address and phone number on the back of a postcard or a stuck-down envelope and send it in. You can enter as many times as you wish, but all entries must be posted separately: don't put several entries in one envelope together, or include entries with letters to any other part of the mag.
COMPETITION, ***AMIGA FORMAT***, 29 MONMOUTH STREET, BATH BA1 2DL.

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DISCOPY LABS, UNIT A, WESTMARCH, LONDON ROAD, DAVENTRY, NORTHANTS, NN11 4SA.

CLASSIC ROCK

I was interested by your article on *Monkey Island* and why it should be hailed as a classic game. My all-time favourite is *Dungeon Master*, to which all other RPGs are compared. This still evokes splendid atmosphere and tension unlike anything that has followed since.

For me, a game has to fulfil these categories to be acclaimed a true classic. It must be: original; challenging; addictive; and have value for money.

Here's my top ten titles, of which the top five, in my opinion, are truly worthy of being called classics. One: *Dungeon Master*. Two: *Populous 2*. Three: *Speedball II*. Four: *Lemmings*. Five: *Arkanoid II*. Six: *Eye of the Beholder II*. Seven: *The Secret of Monkey Island*. Eight: *Another World*. Nine: *Prince of Persia*. Ten: *Gods*.

Steve Hudson, Hull

Interesting, but if one of your categories is originality, how come three of your 'classics' are sequels? It's a thought, innit?

We'd all agree, I'm sure, with all four of your criteria for a classic, but they are very much subjective ideas. Opinions, in other words. Imagine if you were sitting down to try to make a classic game: naturally, you'd want to make it addictive, original and challenging, but what is it about a game that makes it that way?

What I was trying to discuss is whether it would be possible to decide certain qualities you wanted in a game in order to make sure it becomes a classic. By breaking down certain qualities it should be possible to analyse why a game succeeds.

Monkey Island, *for example, is an unoriginal game style: it's a graphic adventure. What it did well, though, was take the basic element of that kind of game - clever puzzles that are tricky but solvable - and make it work to the full. Then it added a whole extra ingredient in the form of humour, which made playing it so enjoyable.*

Similarly, Lemmings *is just a puzzle game with an action element added by the careful use of a time limit and by the need to switch between different types of action. But what makes it such a classic game is doing that bit superbly, and then adding the extra in the form of presentation.*

NO CLASS

I think there is a much easier way to show why a game becomes a classic. Yes, gameplay and graphics count as well, but what makes a classic is a new idea. *Kick Off 2*, for example. A new idea by having a bird's eye view football game with realistic features.

Clive Whiting, Ipswich

On the contrary. Kick Off *was certainly not the first footie game to have a top-down view and most footie games aim for a degree of realism. What made it a classic was sheer speed and frantic action, coupled with a control system that made the best out of that kind of game. QED.*

RATS!

With all this hype about the new Amiga baby, the A600, I think it is about time that Commodore set about redesigning that small piece of hardware that comes with every Amiga, right up to the Rolls Royce itself, the Amiga 3000.

This small, beige piece of junk has been around since before the Amiga was even launched. Long ago, I bought one for my Commodore 128. I must admit, the 1351 was fine with that old set-up. But when I was creating masterpieces with *Deluxe Paint* it didn't have the right feel and it was just frustrating running out of desk space when picking up large brushes.

So what am I rambling on about, if you haven't already guessed? Yes, your friend and mine, the Amiga mouse. There's not a lot to say in its favour when it comes to design, movement or reliability. My advice to all unsuspecting Amiga owners is buy a better mouse before it's too late!

David Broomfield, Baxterley

And by sheer coincidence, what will you find on Pages 157-160 of this very issue but reviews of all the mice we could get and advice on which is the best buy…

PLUS TARD – PAS!

I read with interest Paul Willis' letter in Issue 36 where he drew your attention to Silica's advert for the A600 CD-ROM drive, which doesn't even exist yet. You thought they were "remarkably premature" to advertise it. Well, back in April, on a holiday to France, I bought a French Amiga magazine which carried an ad placed by Commodore France themselves which mentioned what they called the A670 and even carried a picture. On further inspection it actually turned out to be an A570 that had been cunningly tilted round so that you couldn't read the label!

Matthew Armstrong, Southport

Strange stuff, eh? For anyone who doesn't know, the situation with the CD-ROM drive that allows your Amiga to run CDTV discs is that the A500 version is on sale now, while Commodore are working on one for the A600 which will have to use the now-infamous 'credit card slot'. This is technically possible but could prove tricky, so Commodore do not expect to have the A600 version out until after Christmas.

DO IT IN FULL…

In Issue 36, not one of your game reviews, with the exception of the brilliant *Monkey Island 2*, had a full two-page review. I can understand this with games that get a lower rating than 90 per cent but Format Golds such as *Sensible Soccer* and *Striker* getting a quarter page review is just abysmal.

Stefan Allerhand, Reading

Fair comment, but it ain't necessarily so. You'll notice a few more changes in the games pages last month, to accommodate reviews of as many games as possible. What I'd like to know is, why should we give over two, three or four pages to reviewing a game if we can say it all in a quarter of a page? Your letters, please.

TRYING BEFORE YOU BUY

Mark Gaunt (Letters, Issue 36) was complaining that that computer shops should let customers try games out before they buy. Well, my local computer shop will let you play all day on games and not buy a thing. This is the only shop I know of in my area that will allow you to do this.

Andrew Canty, Ipswich

We thoroughly approve of this, but as we have said before, most shops don't want to be treated as a free arcade, so if you abuse the privilege you might find it is taken away. Perhaps readers should use their consumer choice by only going to shops that will let you play before you pay, and asking at shops if they can try a game out before handing over their money.

GOOD NEWS

June's free art package is one of the few programs that work with my Star LC-10 mono printer. I've spent hours adjusting Prefs and dip switches and still failed to print screens from *Deluxe Paint* I, II and III but *SpectraColor Junior* is great.

Tim Ainslie, Cleadon Village

Glad to be of service!

HIPPYCHICK

Reading the *Vista Terraform* write-up (Issue 35 page 154) I noticed the caption to the monolith picture 'Unfortunately you can't add lentils to the structure to make them truly Stonehenge style'. A slip of the pen or the leftovers from the Battle of the Beanfield?

Sandy Jackson, Gosport

Well, let's just say it amused us too.

MARSHMALLOWS?

About your argument that all games are made up of two types: thought games and action games ('What makes a classic?', Issue 36 Page 65). It's perfectly true, but it's like saying there are two classes of pink-and white-marshmallows – pink and white. It would be better to represent games on some sort of scale, with 'all

Continued overleaf



'Adrenalin', by Tim Lewis of Swansea.



'Bird of Prey', by Christopher Mee.



'Lamborghini', by Mike Dobson of Stockport.

THOSE FAMOUS, FUN-FILLED KICK OFF BUGS IN FULL...

One of the best games ever made, was the footie classic Kick Off. *What was so good was the frantic and unpredictable gameplay. Far from being spoiled, it was enhanced by a number of bugs which emphasised its totally wild, unpredictable, illogical nature. We asked for your favourite bugs and* ***Lins Samaraweera of Wealdstone*** *and* ***N Pauwels*** *from somewhere in Europe contributed these gems...*

Any number of men can be sent off, so occasionally the whole opposing team is sent for an early bath. This means if you kick the ball out, here's no-one left to take the throw-in.

The keeper sometimes dives out of the area carrying the ball, without being penalised.

The time keeps running when you get a penalty, so you can wait until the last few seconds before taking it.

If the ball goes into touch and another player touches it after the whistle has gone, the throw can be awarded to the opposition.

Sometimes when the ball bounces back from behind the goal, a mysterious ghostly ball-boy appears.

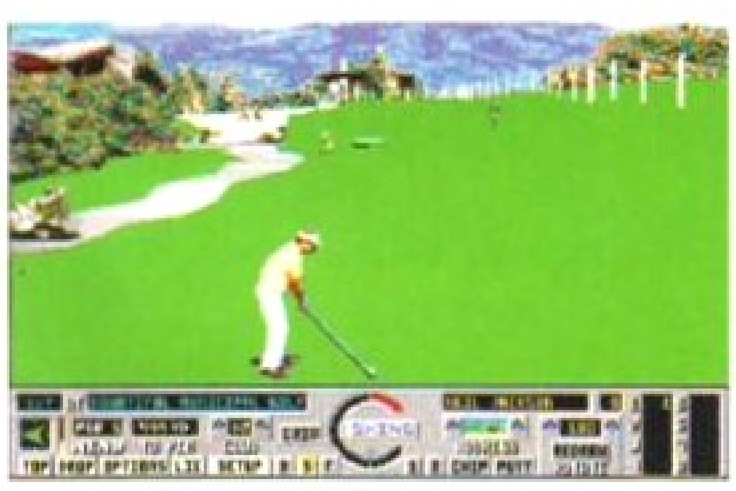
In a really dirty match, when the team is reduced to less than six outfield players the goalie takes part in set-pieces.

In Final Whistle, every so often a player who is taking a corner runs right down to the opposite corner flag and back before taking it.

Players who are sent off in the first half sometimes reappear in the second half.

Kick Off 2 recognises goals as being scored when they hit the back of the net, so this can include shots that sneak through the side netting.

MR MEMORY PROBLEM



I am an Amiga 500 Plus owner, and I see in your review of *Links* that it is hard drive only unless you have 3Mb of memory to store a RAM disk version.

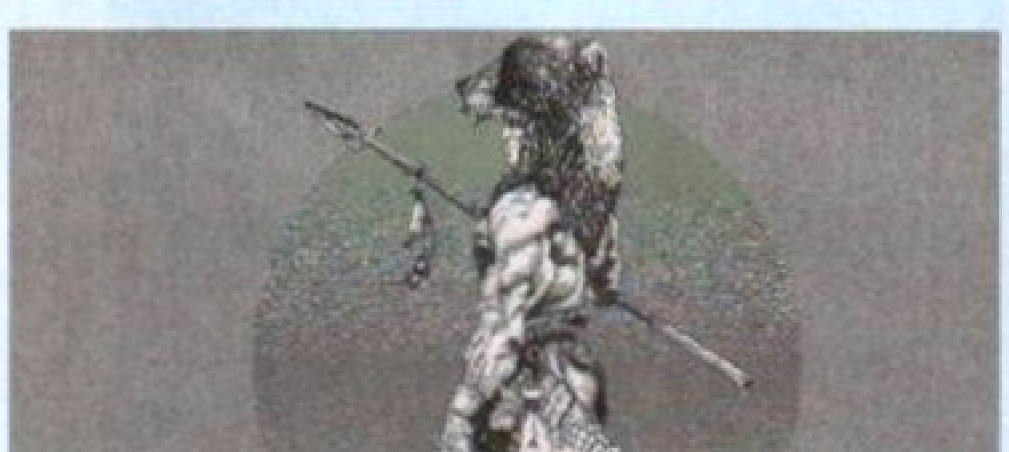
I don't intend to buy a hard drive but a company in your magazine is advertising a 2Mb expansion and says that any memory fitted is in addition to that my machine already has. Does this mean I would have 3Mb? What is a RAM disk?

Brian Luxford, Broadstairs

An A500 Plus has 1Mb already and any more you put in adds to the total, so with a 2Mb expansion you would indeed have a 3Mb machine.

A RAM disk simply means that you can set up your Amiga's Workbench to treat any or all of your RAM as if it were a disk drive: you can then write to and read from it like any other disk, except that it is very swift at accessing data. It's also referred to as the RAD: device. It's already set up on Workbench 2 for you, as an A500 Plus owner, but you would have to assign it a larger capacity. To find out how, simply look it up in the manuals which cover this subject quite well.

So what you would do with Links *if you had 3Mb of RAM available would be to store the whole program in RAM and then run it from there.*



'The Warrior', by Dave Kemden of Redcar.

Next month

AMIGA FORMAT ISSUE 39 OCTOBER 1992

DO NOT FORGET! Get down the shops for your copy on Thursday September 10, or you could miss it!

WHICH PRINTER?



More Amiga owners are thinking about buying a printer than almost any other extra for your Amiga. And you can see why. Imagine being able to print out your *Deluxe Paint* works in full-colour glory, or your DTP pages in sharp, crisp type...

Next month, we'll be testing all the printers that are common in the Amiga market. We'll also be telling you which are the best for you to go out and buy as well as which to avoid in every category of printer.

And more than that, we'll be explaining how all the different kinds of printers work, what the complications are when you're hooking them up to your Amiga, and how to get the best possible output.

In other words, everything you need to know about printers.

CD FOR YOUR AMIGA IS HERE!

We're currently testing one of only 16 A570 CD-ROM drives in the country. By the time the next issue is out, the A570 will be on sale. So should you rush out and buy one? At a price of £349, it's a hard decision to make.

So we'll be helping you out by telling you how the A570 performs. And we won't be stopping there. We'll examine once more the whole world of CDTV software, to see whether what the A570 makes possible is worth having or not.

WHICH WORD PROCESSOR?

We're also going to be testing every word processor on sale, to tell you which is worth saving up for, which is a good option if you need something cheap straightaway, and which to avoid.

ANOTHER COMPLETE COVERDISK PACKAGE

As ever, we don't yet have final confirmation of what it's going to be, but we're working away to get another useful and interesting program for you, and it could be worth anything between £30 and £150. What other magazine gives you more?

PLUS MUCH MORE...

Reviews will include the latest graphics program, *Professional Draw 3* from Gold Disk; the brand new 'floptical drive' storage system from Power; and the all-in-one productivity solution form Europress, *Mini Office*, which could be the answer to your home office needs. And, of course, heaps of other stuff too...

Note: contents list is subject to change at last minute

thought' (like footie management games) at one end and 'all action' (like many shoot-em-ups) at the other. Perhaps then games could be described by a percentage rating on the scale.

David Golder, Wicklow

To be honest, that's really what I was trying to say. It's interesting trying to see how a game liker Lemmings *mixes thought and action, though.*

HARD QUESTIONS

Does everybody have to try so hard to get on to the Letters pages? What's happened to Trenton Webb? One moment in charge of reviewing the next vanished into oblivion. Bring him back!

Patrick Grady, Inverness,

We don't make it easy. After all, we get a heck of a lot of letters every month, so we can't print them all. So the shorter, sweeter and more original your thoughts, the better.

As for Trenty, we would bring him back if we could, I'm sure, but Trenty went at the start of this year to be Editor of Commodore Format *magazine, which he seems to be loving. He was replaced by the extremely capable, very tall and most excellent Neil Jackson, who is equally top*

We're also saying goodbye this month to the long-serving and very popular Maff Evans, who is off to work on a new music magazine. So long, Maff , and thanks for everything except the dreadful industrial bands! Sadly, we've been joined by another crazy north-westerner who likes unpleasant music too, so it's a big hello to Andy 'Nuts' Nuttall.

GAME-MAKER 1

Are there any books about how to make computer games, explaining how to make beautiful graphics, the music and sound effects and the programs?

Derek Stafrece, Malta

The simple answer, unfortunately, is no. There are many books on programming, but most of these are technical manuals. However, there is some light at the end of the tunnel. We are still working to bring you a full tutorial on games programming written by that expert team Bullfrog, the creators of Populous.

Judging by the amount of people who came up to us at the Amiga Shopper *Show and asked when it would be along, this is a popular idea and we are trying to get it confirmed as soon as possible.*

GAME-MAKER 2

I enjoy playing adventure games such as the classic *Magnetic Scrolls* series and I would like to have a crack at something similar. So I bought *DevPac 3* and I've now realised this is not a task to be taken lightly.

Somebody, Somewhere in Summertime

Quite so. The best way to program Amiga games is in assembly language, and the best assembler is DevPac, *but no-one should be under the impression that it's easy. Assembly language is complex and takes a long time to learn and master: it's worse than learning to play piano, for example.*

But there are easier ways to start programming adventure games. One option, Visionary *(65 per cent Issue 31) is actually a programming language, so it's no easier: write that off.* Talespin *is very basic, but could be a start point, especially since it's now widely available very cheaply. And* 3D Construction Kit 2, *demoed on this issue's Coverdisk, could be ideal*

THE GREAT DEBATE GOODBYE 500, HELLO 600

Every month, we're going to pick out one topic which we've been receiving a lot of letters on and cover it in some detail.

This time around, it seems almost inevitable that worries about the demise of the A500 and the capabilities of the new A600 are uppermost in people's minds. So here's just some of the things people are saying on the topic...

This is a copy of a letter I have sent to Commodore. I am a potential Amiga buyer, I have wanted one for some time and I have been saving up the money. Out of 40 people in my office at work, there are 15 Amiga owners and an Amiga user group which I was hoping to join but now I learn that the A500 Plus has been scrapped and replaced by the A600.

My particular concern is the lack of a keypad. I have an avid interest in military aviation. We tried out a number of flight sims on my friend's A500 and, although some of the keypad functions are duplicated elsewhere on the keyboard, there were plenty of problems.

I understand that Commodore have made conversion code available to developers to remap the keypad functions to the main keyboard. However, it seems highly unlikely that companies will re-code all the currently available software. So where does that leave me?

Richard Bayliss, Wigston Harcourt

I'm still unsure about the A600. If the credit card slot is going to mean uncopyable games, this could present a couple of disadvantages.

I would have thought that software houses would be able to charge less, but on games consoles this does not seem to be the case. Exactly the same games appear on the Megadrive as on the Amiga, and for much more money. Is this because the software houses know no-one can get the games except in the shops?

Peter Reeve, Sandal

If ROM cards are to take over, what happens to good old blue 3.5"s? Games may benefit, but what about the million other uses of the floppy - saved IFFs, HAMs, samples, demos and the other 999,996 uses?

The whole point of read/write disks is their wonderful versatility. This is what made the Amiga so popular. There may be 5 million Sega Kids playing away now, but this won't always be the case.

NM Salmon, Warrington

I was reading through Issue 36 when suddenly I came across the following: "I would say this to anyone considering buying an expensive peripheral for their A500: you should ask yourself whether that money should be spent on a discontinued line."

Could you please tell me why he said this if Commodore are planning to market the A570 CD-ROM drive? I've heard it will be going at £299 or probably more. Now I'd call that expensive. Why the hell did he say that if Commodore have any hopes of selling A570s?

Antony Finch, Croydon

I wonder if these A600 smart cards are really unpiratable. Although on consoles it's not possible to copy cards, surely some hacker could write a routine to copy the information on to floppy disk and pirate the game as usual? Maybe the A600 isn't such a smart idea eh, Commodore?

Stephen Croft, Gayton

I feel thoroughly let down and angry. I do understand the need for progress but Commodore should understand the need for the 1.2 million dedicated people who own an A500s in this country who also feel let down and also the potential upgraders who would have gone on to other things.

You only have to look in your local paper to see all of a sudden how many cheap second-hand A500s have now appeared and these people are not selling A500s and then buying A600s as you predicted, no they are buying something else that is going to be a lot more stable. I have asked a lot of advertisers who are offering pathetic prices for the A500 trade-in what they are selling in exchange, and I tell you it's not the 600.

JS Britton, Winchelsea Beach

This last letter I particularly do not understand. I simply cannot see why anyone who has an A500 should suddenly want to sell it, and I don't think it's even remotely true that a lot are now being sold second-hand. Plus, we have never, ever suggested that people should sell their 500 and buy a 600.

As our Super Amigas feature this month proves, the A500 is still very much alive and kicking and is still a most remarkable computer.

The A600 is ideal for newcomers to the Amiga, and will suit most of them down to the ground. For a few more ideas on the topic, read Commodore MD Kelly Sumner's words on Page 30.

Spot the shot 38



Simply identify the game that this small portion of a screen-shot is from, write the answer on a postcard with your name and address and send it in to us.

The address is Spot the Shot 38, ***Amiga Format***, 30 Monmouth St, Bath BA1 2BW. The first correct entry out of the hat every month will win a fabulous ***Amiga Format*** T-shirt!



The winner of Spot the Shot 36 is Martin Luck from Northampton. The correct answer was *Parasol Stars*. I'll avoid jokes about your surname! An incredibly trendy *Amiga Format* T-shirt is on its way to you.

ADVERTISERS INDEX

How fast can you hit a tennis ball? Serving against British 'success' Jeremy Bates in Wimbledon 1992, Frenchman Guy Forget had his shot clocked by the BBC's new radar gun at 131 miles per hour. Our dodgy half-forgotten 'O' level maths figures this out as 64 yards per second. Since a tennis court is only 25 yards long, this hardly gives the returner much of a chance. Needless to say, the serve was an ace.

Two facts from quite different sources this month give a glimpse of the future power balance of the world. It is estimated that by the year 2010, all the Far Eastern countries which are known for cheap labour and cheap goods - Taiwan, Singapore, Mauritius and so on - will share with Japan a higher standard of living than the industrial West.

At the same time, we've just discovered that the cheapest brand-new car now available in the UK is the Yugo Tempo hatchback, at only £2,499. Bearing in mind it's made in Yugoslavia, that's possibly not too surprising. But the point is, before long Europe could be becoming a poverty-stricken backwater as far as world civilisation is concerned. And as I write, Albania is higher in the Olympic medals table than Great Britain…

Is there life deep under the earth? Well, yes, it seems there is. Researchers with very long drills have discovered bacteria – microbes – living in rock as much as two miles below the earth's surface. These organisms are now being cultured in the laboratory, where they need temperatures of around 100° centigrade, about the boiling point of water, in order to survive. This is bizarre because they appear to live off the energy from the earth's core, not needing the sun which it was believed was the energy source for all life. Scientists now hope that life can exist on other, more desolate planets in our solar system.

Actual Reality

The future of entertainment? As prophets and visionaries predict that we will soon be escaping into an unreal world inside our computers , **Damien** makes a pioneering exploration into the shadowy world that exists outside computers. It's the latest thing it's Actual Reality, proving that life is stranger than fiction.

Arthur C Clark Corner

Arthur C Clarke, the science fiction writer who has predicted all kinds of technological advances that have come to pass, was back in this country the other week celebrating his birthday, or something like that. He normally lives in Sri Lanka, so it must have been a bit of a culture shock. But did you know he is a keen Amiga user, the owner of an A3000 and a big fan of the fractal landscape program *Vista*?

You have to feel sorry for the archer who shot the flaming torch into the gas flame at the Olympics opening ceremony. It looked so good as it arched through the night to light the enormous flame. The videotaped evidence showed that he missed by about eight feet and a guy in the control room started up the flame by pressing a button. He must have been so disappointed, poor chap.

Will you miss the European Fighter Aircraft? When Germany pulled out of the project, we were hoping this wouldn't mean the end of the project. It really is the most amazing aeroplane. The engineers worked out that what stops a fighter aircraft from being really manoeuvrable is the fact that it is basically designed to fly straight and level, so in turns it's flying on its natural instincts. The EFA is designed to turn: it's completely unstable and the only thing that keeps it going straight and level is hundreds of adjustments to the control surfaces made every second by the computer fly-by-wire system. get a Guru on that, and you've bought a small-holding.

Our home entertainment future will be decided by the MPEG chip set (see News, Page 20), the little electronic bunch of tricks that makes it possible to store full-motion video digitally. Possibly the first real use of digital video will be in subscription cable TV, where viewers will be able to phone up and choose their film for the evening from literally thousands of movies stored digitally. It is predicted by Kelly Sumner, MD of Commodore UK, that the video rental shops will be out of business within three years. Video tape? Thing of the past...



A meeting of technologies at the Hockenheim Grand Prix in Germany proved fascinating. If you watched it on the telly, you will have seen the amazing pictures produced by a new slow-motion video camera used by the German television company. By running at a much higher speed, this is able to go much slower on slow-motion playback and produces the most astonishingly detailed images. On the extremely bumpy chicane, you could see quite clearly how the 'active suspension' used on Mansell's Williams coped with the bumps, sensing each change and adjusting the ride height in fractions of a second. Remarkable.

Amiga Format

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COLOUR ORIGINATORS Phoenix Repro
PRINTERS Chase Web, St Ives PLC, Plymouth

NEWS TRADE DISTRIBUTION UK Future Publishing 0225 442244
NEWS TRADE DISTRIBUTION OVERSEAS: MMC Ltd 0483 211222
CIRCULATION DIRECTOR Sue Hartley 0225 442244

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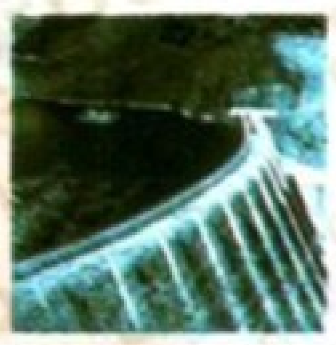


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